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EDITED BY THE

Rev. W. LUCAS COLLINS, M.A.

(*SUPPLEMENTARY SERIES.*)

LIVY

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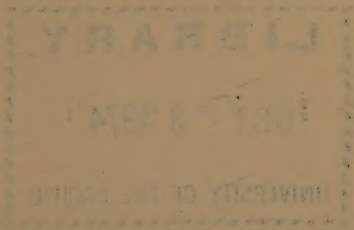
LIVY



BY THE

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LIVY.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

TITUS LIVIUS PATAVINUS—owing this last name to his having been born at Patavium (Padua)—was one of that brilliant circle of authors who lighted the court of Augustus. His birth may be fixed with most probability in 59 B.C., the year in which Julius Cæsar and Bibulus were consuls. Horace would thus be his senior by about five years, and Virgil ten; and although his name is not mentioned by either poet, he was probably well acquainted with both. Though of provincial origin, as were nearly all the great Roman writers, he came of a family which had in its day given consuls to Rome; and his native city, in which his own particular branch of it had settled, was one of the most important in Italy. His original profession was most probably that of a professor of rhetoric: a vocation not only popular and respectable, but often highly lucrative, if the professor could get his lectures well attended. We know nothing of his first intro-

duction to the capital; but, if we may trust his contemporary, Horace, literary ability of any kind was a ready passport to the acquaintance of some of the great men about Augustus' court, and through them to the emperor himself. Some such introduction was at least effected; for he mentions in the early part of his history, very simply and as though it were quite an ordinary event, his having accompanied Augustus into the temple of Jupiter Feretrius, and heard him read the old inscriptions there.* Some degree of intimacy seems also to be implied by the anecdote recorded by the historian Tacitus,† that Livy had expressed such a warm admiration of the character of Pompey, the unsuccessful opponent of the first Cæsar, that Augustus used good-humouredly to call him a "Pompeyite," without allowing the fact of this predilection for his uncle's great rival to interfere in any way with their friendship. It is said that he even had apartments assigned him in the imperial palace.

It may very probably have been in accordance with some suggestion from Augustus himself, or some of the able ministers who were in his confidence, that he first turned his attention from rhetoric to history. A crowd of small authors, eager to meet the tastes of a patron who was himself an author—though he had the good sense to burn his tragedies instead of publishing them—were busy writing on the recent civil wars. The great emperor—let his undefined position be so termed, in default of any other word to express it—was always anxious to magnify the historic glories of Rome. As

* Book iv. chap. 20. † Tac. Annals, iv. 34.

in that interest he had made Virgil an epic poet almost against his will, so we may conceive he recognised in the eloquent rhetorician all the capacities of a court historian. There can be no doubt, at least, that the author of the 'Annals of Rome' had the hearty concurrence of Augustus in the great work which he undertook. That he must have had free access to public documents and records is evident from the references and quotations in the body of his history. Without such facilities it could never have been written, and to have obtained them implies much more intimate relations with the existing authorities than would be necessarily the case in our more liberal days. Another proof that he enjoyed some degree of intimacy with the family of the Cæsars may be found in the statement of Suetonius, that it was at his suggestion that young Claudius Nero, the step-son of Augustus and future emperor, began the study of history. On this slight ground some of his biographers have built a theory that the education of the young prince had been intrusted to him.

Such biographies of him as are extant—notably that by his own townsman, Giacomo Tomasini, bishop of Citta Nuova—are utterly untrustworthy in their details. All that we know of his private life is that he was certainly married, and had at least one son and one daughter. The latter became the wife of Magius or Magirus, who is said by the elder Seneca to have owed his fame as a rhetorician rather to the merits of his father-in-law than to his own. So widespread, indeed, was the reputation of the great historian even

during his life, that Pliny relates, in one of his letters, the fact of a man having once made a journey all the way from Cadiz merely to gratify himself with a sight of him. If we want to see how biographies grow, we have only to read the amplification of this fact, if fact it be, by such a respectable writer as St Jerome: "We read," says he (and he must mean in Pliny), "that to drink of the rich stream of eloquence which flowed from Livy there came sundry men of noble birth from the most distant parts of Spain—from Cadiz—and from Gaul: and men whom the sight of Rome itself had failed to attract, were drawn thither by the fame of a single individual. That generation saw a wonder, unheard of in any age, and ever to be remembered, that visitors entered such a city, and yet were seeking something beside and beyond it." * Livy returned to end his days in his native town, where he died at the age of seventy-one.

Some thirteen centuries after his death, the good citizens of Padua thought they had discovered his bones. First of all, in 1360, a tablet was dug up within the monastery of St Justina, bearing an inscription in which certainly occurred the name of T. Livius, and which was at once associated with the great historian. Then, about fifty years afterwards, in digging the foundations of some new buildings, the workmen came upon an ancient pavement, and below it a leaden cist enclosing human bones. The older monks pronounced this to be the very place where the monumental tablet had previously been found; and, there could

* S. Hieron. Epist. 53.

be no doubt, these were the bones of Livy. Great honour was paid to them, and a costly monument erected at the public expense. But in one respect the citizens were ungrateful: they made a present of the bone of the right arm—the arm which had written the immortal 'Annals'—to Alphonso "the Magnanimous," King of Arragon and the Two Sicilies; whose successors (for he died before it reached him) had it enclosed in a rich shrine. The whole romance, however, which had gathered round the great author's bones, was dissipated by the same relentless modern criticism which has since dealt so hardly with the earlier portions of his 'Annals.' Under competent examination, the abbreviations on the monumental tablet—and therefore probably the bones—were found to belong to a slave who had received his freedom, had in consequence taken the name of his master, which happened to be "Livius," and had subsequently risen to some distinction in the city.

Besides his great historical work, Livy wrote (probably at an earlier period) certain Dialogues and treatises on philosophy, of which we know nothing beyond their mention by Seneca. The 'Annals,' which alone have reached us, and these in a sadly mutilated shape, contained in their entirety the history of Rome from its foundation down to within a few years of the Christian era. Of the hundred and forty-two "books" to which the work extended, we have now but thirty-five, and of these some were recovered only in the sixteenth century. Pope Gregory I. is said to have ordered all the copies of the 'Annals' on which he could lay

hands to be burnt, because of the many superstitious stories they contained; and the same is said to have been done by Gregory VII. Considering the character of the legends which the Roman Church of those days adopted for its own, these zealous precautions may seem somewhat inconsistent. There is a fanciful kind of division of the books into "decades," or sets of ten each, —an arrangement due probably to the early editors rather than to the author. We have the first, third, and fourth of these decades entire, with half of the fifth, and a few fragments of the others. Unhappily, the lost portion, as containing the later and more authentic history of the Roman people, and more especially of the period with which the writer was contemporary, is that we should have most wished to see. Lord Bolingbroke said that he would willingly give up all we have for what we have not; but this is not, after all, a very remarkable concession, since the missing books are more than thrice as many as their survivors. Dr Arnold's valuation is more just: he says that we might afford to give up "every line of Livy's history that we at present possess, if we could so purchase the recovery of the eighth and ninth decades only, which contained the history of the Italian War, and the Civil War of Marius and Sylla." Gibbon goes so far as to say that he would readily sacrifice the works of a good many ancient authors which we possess, for Livy's history of the sixty years between A.U.C. 663 and 723. From time to time scholars have been tantalised with hopes of recovering the lost manuscripts, and reports of their existence—often in the most un-

likely quarters. Buried in dust in the library of the ignorant and jealous monks of Mount Athos, whence the great Colbert had an idea of sending "two frigates under Maltese colours to fetch them"—hidden in the seraglio of the Grand Turk—in the island of Chios—in St Columba's monastery at Iona,—the lost treasure was heard of, but never found. At one time a complete manuscript was "daily expected from the Escurial;" at another, it was said to have actually "arrived in Dublin." Once, it is said, "a page of the second decade was found by a man of letters in the parchment of his battledore, while he was amusing himself in the country. He hastened to the maker of the battledore, but arrived too late; the man had finished the last page of Livy—about a week before!"*

So voluminous a work was not given to the public all at once by its author. The Roman annalist, like so many of his modern successors, seems to have published a volume at a time. The first decade was written and issued at Rome probably between B.C. 27 and 20, at the same time that Virgil was writing his Æneid. But the later books, as is clear from the last events they record, could not have been finished until some twenty years afterwards. Their contents are fortunately known to us by means of epitomes, the work of some unknown compiler of early date—possibly not much later than the original historian—which have survived, though the books of which they form the summary have perished. There are some

* Disraeli, Cur. of Lit.

intervals of Roman history for which these dry skeletons remain as our sole authorities.

It has been remarked as unfortunate that such fragments as we have of Livy's great work form by no means the most valuable portion. The first decade contains the history of 460 years—from the foundation of Rome to her subjugation of her warlike neighbours the Samnites. How far myth supplies the place of history throughout the whole of this period is a question still under debate by scholars. But the old faith which believed in Romulus and Remus as undoubtedly as in Antony and Augustus has at least departed long ago. Critical students have recognised the fact that for all this long period we have absolutely nothing like contemporary authority. Livy made full use, as might be expected, and as he distinctly asserts, of the works of previous annalists and historians. But all these were of comparatively recent date. Quintus Fabius Pictor, the earliest Roman historian of whom we have any mention, and Cincius Alimentus, were both alive during the Second Punic War, and these are the most ancient authorities to whom Livy refers. There is therefore no trace of contemporary history for the first five centuries of Rome. The 'Origines' of Cato the Elder, the History of M. Acilius Glabrio, and the 'Annals' of Calpurnius Piso —to all of which Livy makes reference—were still more modern compilations. So that in the early history of Rome, we have not only to take into account the tendency to the marvellous and the mythical which is the characteristic of all chroniclers in the infancy of

a national literature, but also the still more embarrassing fact that Rome seems to have had, for those five hundred years, no written history at all, in our modern sense of the word.

There were, however, certain public records from which Fabius and Cincius, and other writers, may be supposed to have drawn their information. There were the "Annals," as they were called, in which the Pontifex Maximus set down the chief events of each year. There were the "Commentaria," or notes of events, kept in the sacred colleges of pontiffs and augurs, and those of the censors, which appear to have been carefully preserved in their respective families. There were, again, certain registers written on linen (*libri lintei*), preserved in the temple of Juno Moneta on the Capitol, which gave at least the names of the consuls and other public officers for the year, and which Livy himself quotes more than once, though at second-hand. But such records, even allowing them to have been correctly kept as to the succession of magistrates and the leading events of each year—laws passed, treaties made, and even victories won—could not, from their very nature, enter into those details of person, and circumstance, and motive, which the historian requires in order to make his narrative readable. The 'Annales Maximi' of the pontiffs which Aulus Gellius had seen were, he assures us, very jejune and dry, and far from pleasant reading.* There comes in again another difficulty as to the authenticity of even these dry bones of history them-

* Aul. Gell. ii. 28, v. 377.

selves,—that both Livy and other writers distinctly state that when Rome was burnt by the Gauls, most of these public records perished in the conflagration; so that Fabius Pictor and his successors would not have had even these authorities to work from—authorities which, however meagre, would be trustworthy so far as they went. Probably the Romans would not be slow to repair such destruction in the only way they could, by substituting new records more or less imaginary. As our own monastic bodies in England could always produce charters of the earliest date, though admitting in their own chronicles that the whole contents of their monastery had been burnt by the Danes; so an unbroken list of consuls, dictators, and censors was drawn up, from whatever sources, in the reign of Augustus or Tiberius, and is still extant, in a somewhat mutilated condition, as the 'Fasti Capitolini.'

Besides these official records, materials for history would be at hand in the copies of treaties made with neighbouring states, which were in most cases engraved on brazen plates or pillars, and kept for safe custody in the temples; as well as in the laws passed from time to time, which were engraved and preserved in the same way. But of these, again, Livy says that many were destroyed in the burning of the city. Even in cases where they still existed, there are, unfortunately, many indications that he was too little sensible of their value, and too negligent in consulting them. Other sources from which the early historian of Rome might draw very tempting but not very trust-

worthy information, for the biographical part of his work, would be the funeral orations pronounced over distinguished men, recounting their deeds and those of their ancestors, copies of which were religiously preserved in their families, and in the commemorative inscriptions on the statues of deceased heroes. But the latter, as Livy himself admits,* were often notoriously false. Dr Arnold pronounces them "the most unscrupulous in falsehood of any pretended records of facts that the world has yet seen." † Indeed, if we bear in mind the character of our old-fashioned funeral sermons and epitaphs, or a more modern French funeral "oration," we may judge how far this kind of biographical record is likely to contribute to the strict facts of history. More to be depended upon, in their spirit if not in their details, would be the ancient chants and lays, preserved from age to age in the national memory, even if not committed in every case to writing, and recited or sung at religious festivals and at private banquets. That such was the Roman custom may be gathered from many allusions in Roman writers; but how early the production of such historical lays may have been, is quite uncertain. Niebuhr considers that they form a large portion of the substructure of such early Roman history as we have. He thinks that he can trace distinct poems on the adventures of Romulus, the rule of Tullus Hostilius, the combat of the Horatii with the Curiatii, the destruction of Alba, the story of the Tarquins, the battle of the Lake Regillus, the exploits of Coriolanus, and

* Book viii. chap. 34, 40. † Hist. of Rome, iii. 373.

other romantic episodes of Roman history; and he even claims to have detected in the pages of Livy fragments of the old metrical diction.* Such investigations must always be more or less fanciful; yet there can be no reasonable doubt but that the exploits of national heroes were worked into song at a very early period by the Romans as well as by other nations; and they must have had some share, and perhaps a large share, in the making of national history. Although this early poetry has wholly perished (as has been the fate, no doubt, of much traditional literature of this kind in all nations), there are fragments still preserved of metrical annals of a later date. Ennius, who lived nearly two centuries before Livy, wrote eighteen books of "Annals" in verse; and it is not likely that his was the first attempt at a metrical chronicle. Nothing remains of his work but a few lines preserved here and there in the pages of other writers; but Livy must have seen it, and Niebuhr thinks he was indebted to it for his 'History of the Kings.'

It has been urged, on the other hand, that it is all but incredible that a people like the Romans, extending as they did so widely, even in those earlier times, their rule and their commerce, should for so many years have possessed no contemporary and authentic history. It is possible, of course, that Fabius and Piso may have had access to chronicles which were

* It is scarcely necessary to remind the English reader that Lord Macaulay strongly supports Niebuhr's view, and has made it the foundation of his 'Lays of Ancient Rome.'

afterwards lost; and as their own works have perished, we have no means of ascertaining what opportunities they enjoyed, or to what authorities they may have referred. There may have been an earlier historical literature known to them, though not to Livy. But it must be confessed that the whole of his account of the Seven Kings of Rome reads rather like a series of romantic legends than a record of actual events; and only as such can it reasonably be accepted. We may fairly say of this portion of his 'Annals' what he says himself of the times before the foundation of Rome—that "they had more of the embellishments of fable than of the simplicity of fact." And it may be strongly suspected that what he here asserts of antecedent traditions he would have admitted to be true of such traditions as he has embodied in his work. It is not likely that the age of legend came to a close, and the age of history began, at a date exactly coinciding with the building of Rome. What amount of fact is embalmed in the pleasant fable—for that some substratum of fact there is cannot reasonably be doubted—is a question which has furnished, and will probably continue to furnish, discussion for more learned and ambitious volumes than ours.

The form into which Livy has thrown his work—that of Annals, naming the public officers and recording the events of each succeeding year—was probably adopted from his predecessors, but is very inconvenient. It interrupts awkwardly the continuous story of a campaign or of a great political revolution, and is a source to the reader of bewilderment rather

than of assistance. Especially does it seem unsuited to the author's picturesque and somewhat diffuse style, which suffers much in its general effect from these constant formal interruptions. The annalistic method will not be followed in these pages; and only such dates are inserted as seemed of special importance.

CHAPTER II.

ROME UNDER ITS SEVEN KINGS.

(BOOK I. B.C. 753–509.)

It has been already said that these 'Annals' begin with the foundation of the city of Rome. The author adopts—he could scarcely do otherwise—the current legend of Æneas having led a colony of Trojans into Latium, the fated end of his wanderings after his escape from Troy. The belief in this old heroic descent, true or false, was too strong in the Roman mind for any writer of national history to venture upon questioning it, even had historical criticism been understood in those times. It was seriously referred to, from time to time, in public acts and documents. Augustus himself encouraged it as a point of national pride; acute and philosophical historians like Sallust —to use Sallust's own words—"accepted" it. It is not necessary to examine too closely into the private and personal belief of either historian in this national pedigree, any more than into his personal faith in the national theology. Livy's own expression when he introduces the story—"*satis constat*"—does not necessarily mean more than "it is universally admitted."

He took the tale as he found it. He was by no means prepared, as all our modern historians are, with a plausible theory of his own which should sift, or interpret, or altogether explode, the popular story; and the public for whom he was writing would have been very far from appreciating his work if he had propounded any theories of the kind.

The beginning of this history, then, is, in fact, a continuation of the Æneid, and scarcely professes to be more historical. We have the landing in Italy of Æneas and his Trojans; his marriage with Lavinia, daughter of Latinus the king; and his foundation of a city called Lavinium, after her name. Here, indeed, Livy gives his readers the choice between two of the current legends: either this marriage was the result of an amicable arrangement between the intruder and the natives, or the hand of the princess and the partition of the kingdom were the prizes of a victorious battle fought by Æneas against the king. We have also, as Virgil gives us, the attempt of Turnus, the young king of the Rutulans, to exact vengeance for the loss of Lavinia, who had already been affianced to him, his appeal for aid to the powerful Etruscans, and his defeat and death in battle. And here the historian gives us the fulfilment of those foreboding words which the poet has put into the mouth of his hero when he is bidding farewell to his young son before he goes to this his last victory,—

> "Learn of thy father to be great—
> Of others to be fortunate." *

* Virgil, Æn. xii. 435.

In that battle on the banks of the Numicius the great Æneas died, says our historian, and was buried there; disappeared in some mysterious fashion, said another and more popular legend, adapting itself to that passionate hero-worship which, as in the case of the Britons and Arthur, would not admit any such common circumstance as death.

The widowed Lavinia is said to have ruled the new kingdom during the infancy of her son Ascanius; for, in these pages, it is she who is the mother of the young chief, and not the unhappy Creusa. All goes on happily under her government; the warlike Etruscans have been reduced to quiet, and consent to let the Tiber be the boundary between them and the new Latin kingdom, whose prosperity is so great that Ascanius, when he grows to manhood, leads part of its increasing population to found a new settlement under the Alban Hills, which he calls Alba Longa ("the Long White Town"). There reigned, according to the story, a succession of kings called Silvii, from Silvius the son of Ascanius, from whom in course of time spring Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome.

For as the historian did not dream of questioning the traditional descent from Troy, still less would he have run counter to the national boast that the Romans were the sons of the war-god and the nurslings of the she-wolf. So we have given us in full detail the legend of the Twins, sons of the god Mars by the mortal princess, Rhea Silvia, who had been condemned by an usurping uncle to perpetual virginity; the Twins who

escape the doom pronounced by the usurper when he hears of their birth—

> "The children to the Tiber,
> The mother to the tomb"—

who are suckled by the wolf and found by the shepherd, who live by robbing the robbers, whom their old grandfather Numitor recognises by their noble bearing, and who slay the usurper Amulius, and restore the kingdom to its rightful heir. Did any one doubt the story? Was there not, as our author points out, the fig-tree called Ruminalis yet standing, under which the Twins were suckled? And was there not, he might have added, the famous statue of the wolf and her nurslings, set up under that fig-tree, still to be seen?* Such memorials were far more to the Roman taste than any amount of historical criticism.

So Romulus and Remus, continues the legend, proceeded to build their new city; but the brothers quarrelled, and the younger fell by the elder's hand. And Romulus went on with his work alone, and called it from his own name, Rome. But the circuit which in his ambition he had enclosed within his new walls proved too large for his present colony, and he opened an "asylum," to which he invited all the reckless and discontented spirits in the neighbouring tribes. So the town was at last filled with citizens; and Romulus chose a senate of a hundred elders, and for

* Erected out of the fines levied on usurers (Liv. x. 69). It is not certain whether the figure of the wolf now shown in the Palazzo de' Conservatori at Rome is the same or not.

his own greater dignity assumed (from the Etruscans, as our author thinks) the ivory "curule chair," and the white robe with the purple border, and the twelve "lictors" to attend him in state, bearing the rods and axes in token of executive power—the well-known emblems which ever after accompanied the sovereignty of Rome.

But the new population, as might be expected from the manner in which it had been got together, was deficient in the matter of wives; and this deficiency the neighbouring tribes were by no means willing to supply. Upon which the Romans had recourse to a stratagem which reads very much like a piece of the actual history of a rude age. It is an almost exact repetition of the raid of the men of Benjamin at Shiloh. Romulus proclaimed a festival; and when the daughters of the Sabines came to see, at a given signal they were seized and carried off to become the wives of the Romans. The outrage is said to have aroused, as it well might, the wrath not only of the Sabines, but of other neighbouring tribes, against this lawless young community. But when these latter marched their forces against him, Romulus defeated them all in succession, slaying and stripping with his own hand the chief of the Cæninans (Acro, Plutarch tells us, was his name), and solemnly offering the spoils in the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol—the first of those *spolia opima*, as they were afterwards called, won by one general from the person of another. The Sabines proved a more formidable enemy. They had actually forced their way into Rome, and a fierce conflict within

the walls was being waged with doubtful success, when the captured women—already reconciled to their compulsory bridegrooms—rushed between the lines, and entreated their fathers and husbands not to shed each other's blood. The result was not only peace, but a fusion of the two peoples; and in compliment to their new friends, the Romans took the additional name of Quirites, from the Sabine town of Cures or Quiris; and it was agreed that the nation should form three tribes,—the Ramnenses, taking its name from Romulus; the Titienses, from Tatius, king of the Sabines; while for the third, the Luceres, Livy can find no derivation.

The rest of this first Book contains the history, or rather the series of legends which passed for history, of Rome under its seven kings. Romulus, after reducing to subjection the neighbouring towns of Fidenæ and Veii, disappeared in a violent storm, said the popular fable, and was seen no more upon earth. Some would have it, says the historian, that he was made away with—"torn limb from limb"—by the senate, with whom he was never popular, although the darling of the army. He was succeeded by Numa Pompilius, a Sabine from Cures, the law-maker of the new commonwealth, as Romulus had been its conquering hero. He was the Alfred of Roman history, civilising his rude subjects, reforming their calendar, and dividing the country into cantons. His reign of forty-three years was purely peaceful—a new age of gold. To him succeeded Tullus Hostilius, who reduced Alba, the mother-city of Rome, into subjection to the younger

but stronger power. To this war belongs the picturesque legend of the combat between the three brothers on each side—the Horatii for the Romans, and Curiatii on the Alban side—with the fatal blow given by the one surviving Horatius to his sister, when, instead of welcoming him after his victory, she meets him with tears of regret for her lover whom he has slain.

The rasing to the ground of the walls of Alba, when its whole population has been transplanted to the younger city after the victory, is told in Livy's best style, though we must suppose that he is indebted, at least for the details, to his own imagination.

"Then the legions were marched up to rase the city. When they entered the gates, there was none of the tumult or panic which is wont to be seen in captured towns, where the gates have been forced, or the walls breached by battering-rams, or the citadel taken by storm; when the shouts of the enemy are loud, and the rush of armed troops through the city lays everything waste with fire and sword. But a gloomy silence, and a sorrow that found no voice, so overwhelmed the hearts of all, that for very terror they forgot what they meant to carry away and what to leave behind; losing all presence of mind, they kept questioning each other, now standing idly in their doorways, now wandering helplessly through their houses, which they knew they should never see again. But when the shouts of the mounted guard, who were ordering them to quit, came nearer, and they heard the crash of the buildings which were already being pulled down in the outer quarters of the town, and saw the dust rising from distant points, and filling the whole place as it were with an overshadowing cloud—then, snatching up and carrying off each what came first to hand, they made their way out, leaving their hearths and household altars, and the roof

under which they had been born and brought up, and filled the roads with a continuous stream of emigrants. The sight of each other's misery renewed their tears; and piteous were the wailings heard, especially from the women, as they passed the temples they so venerated, now surrounded with guards of soldiers, and left, as it seemed, their very gods in captivity. When all the Alban population had quitted the place, the Romans levelled to the ground every building, public and private, and gave to utter destruction in a single hour the work of four hundred years, the time during which Alba had stood. Only the temples of the gods were left untouched, for such had been the king's command."—(i. 29.)

The fourth king was Ancus Martius—less warlike than Romulus, less peaceful than Numa. Under him the Aventine hill was included within the walls, and the Janiculum thrown out on the northern bank of the Tiber, and successful wars with the neighbouring tribes marked the still growing power of Rome.

And now there comes in, according to the legends which the historian followed, a new dynasty of kings, and for the first time the annals of Greece and Rome are brought for a moment into connection. The story of the Tarquins, as Livy tells it, is briefly this: One Demaratus, a Corinthian, had emigrated during a political revolution and settled at Tarquinii. His son Lucumo had married an Etruscan wife of high family and imperious spirit; and she could not bear to see her husband looked down upon as a foreigner and an alien. She persuaded him to remove to Rome—"amongst a new people energy and merit must make their way:" and an omen—an eagle which took off

her husband's cap and replaced it, as they entered the city gates—confirmed her advice. In the course of time King Ancus died; and though he left two sons, Lucumo (or Lucius Tarquinius, as the new Roman citizen now called himself), already popular owing to his wealth and his gracious manners, was elected king. The new reign was prosperous; the old enemies of Rome, the Latins and Sabines, were successfully held in check; the cavalry force of the state was strengthened, the city walls completed, and those great public sewers which are even now the wonder of all beholders were begun. But the disappointed sons of Ancus had bided their time, and they slew the foreigner. Their father's sceptre, however, passed into other hands. A boy had been brought up in the house of Tarquinius, the son of a slave mother, on whose head while sleeping lambent flames had been seen to play. Tanaquil's divining eyes saw in the prodigy an intimation of his future eminence: his abilities as he grew up confirmed it, and he had become their son-in-law. To him Tanaquil appealed after her husband's assassination; and they concealed his actual death from the people until the son-in-law, Servius Tullius, who at once assumed the royal functions, was securely established in power, and the sons of Ancus had to take refuge in exile.

To the reign of Servius—the "King of the Commons"—the historian attributes certain changes in the constitution of a more or less popular character. He is said to have instituted the "census" of property, and to have divided the people into "classes" and

"centuries," in such a way as to give the plebeians what they had not before, a distinct organisation as a component part of the state, and make the burden of military service press more equally upon rich and poor. He also allotted to the poorer citizens some of the land taken from their neighbouring enemies in war. In his reign, it was said, the city was extended to three new hills—the Quirinal, the Viminal, and the Esquiline—and the whole surrounded by walls which continued to bear his name, and to form the boundaries of the city for some eight hundred years, down to the time of the Emperor Aurelian. But the new king's daughters had married the two sons of his predecessor Tarquinius; and the younger Tullia, after murdering her own husband, had married his elder brother Lucius, who had made room for her by the murder of his wife. With her full consent, her new husband plotted with other young nobles, who hated the Commons' King, to murder him and take his place. The plot was successful; Servius was flung down the steps of the senate-house by his son-in-law's hand, and despatched by his retainers.

"It was believed that this was done at the instigation of Tullia, inasmuch as she did not shrink from the wickedness that followed. At least, it is an admitted fact that she drove in her chariot to the Forum, unabashed by the crowd of men, and summoning her husband from the senate-house was the first to hail him "king." When he bade her begone from such a scene of tumult, and she was making her way home, she ordered her chariot to turn to the right down the Orbian Hill, so as to drive out through the Esquiline; when the man who drove her horses suddenly

stopped in horror, checked the reins, and pointed out to his mistress the body of the murdered Servius lying in the road. Whereupon a foul and inhuman deed is said to have been done, and the place serves yet as a memorial of it (men call it the Accursed Quarter, *Vicus Sceleratus*), along which in her madness, urged by the avenging shades of her murdered sister and husband, Tullia is said to have driven her chariot over the corpse of her father, and to have carried home on the blood-stained vehicle—nay, on her very dress and person—the traces of his slaughter, to defile the household gods of herself and her new consort; and that from the wrath of those offended powers, the reign which had been so ill begun was speedily brought to a like violent termination."—(i. 48.)

For it was this Lucius Tarquinius—who thus seized the crown, as Livy says, "with no other right than force, unauthorised either by senate or commons"—who made the very name of "king" ever after hateful to a Roman ear. He was known as Superbus—the Insolent. He assumed absolute power; surrounded himself with an armed guard; forbade all new elections to the senate; and, in short, played the tyrant at all points. But, tyrant though he was, he maintained the power of Rome stoutly and successfully against the neighbouring tribes. He reduced the Volscians by force and the town of Gabii by stratagem, and made an advantageous treaty with the still powerful confederation of the Latins. He is said also to have founded the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill (a work which had been contemplated by the first Tarquinius), and in order to gain room for the new buildings, to have removed, with their own consent, the temples and altars of all the other deities who had been hitherto

established there. Two only, when consulted by the augurs, refused to abandon their ancient seat — Terminus and Juventas; a refusal which was naturally taken as a most happy omen, that the boundaries of Rome should never grow narrower, and that her youth and vigour should be perpetual. It is plain that under the guise of this new foundation and removal we have a notice, however vague, of some radical change in the national religion, and probably of the introduction, under the house of the Tarquinii, of the Etruscan divinities and their sacred rites.

The reign of the second Tarquinius ended, as it began, in violence. The outrage committed by his son Sextus on Lucretia, wife of Collatinus, and the whole tragical story of her suicide and the revenge taken by her husband and father, is an episode of Roman history known to most readers. It is told briefly enough, but not the less graphically, in the conclusion of Livy's first Book. But it is neither the father nor the husband to whom the annalist ascribes the leading part in the great revolution which followed. It is Lucius Junius, a nephew of the royal house, called "Brutus" from his singular stolidity and apathy —assumed, we are told, to make his position all the safer under a tyrant's reign—to whom an oracle has, according to his own interpretation, foretold succession to the chief power at Rome.

"While they stood wrapped in grief, he drew the knife from the body of Lucretia, and holding it up before him dripping with her blood, said—'By this blood, most chaste and undefiled before this outrage of a tyrant, I swear—and

I call you, ye gods, to witness,—that I will follow up with fire and sword, and all such means as in us lie, Lucius Tarquinius Superbus and his accursed wife, with all their seed and breed; and never suffer either them or any other hereafter to reign as king at Rome.' Then he hands the knife to Collatinus, and then to Lucretius and Valerius, who marvelled at the strangeness of the thing, whence this new spirit had come into the breast of Brutus. As they were bidden, so they swore: and at once from that moment, when Brutus calls on them to drive out the tyrants, they follow him as their leader."—(i. 59.)

This story of the Tarquins presents all the characteristics of legend, even without taking into account the many practical contradictions involved in it by the dates of their respective reigns. Yet it is quite as impossible to doubt that under this legend, however disguised, we have the record of some very important changes in the fortunes of Rome. There is almost certainly a change in the dynasty, and probably a temporary subjugation of Rome to the Etruscans. The massive character of the masonry in the substructure of the temple on the Capitoline, and that of the Cloaca Maxima, both said to have been built under the rule of the Tarquins, and which are evidently of very early date, marks it as almost certainly Etruscan. Nor is there any reason to doubt that the name of the Tarquinii is historical, however much the history of their rule at Rome may be overlaid with fable. A tomb was discovered in the year 1849 at Cære, in Etruria (to which town the banished family are said by Livy to have retired after their expulsion from Rome), containing thirty-five names, among which both

the Etruscan form, Tarchnas, and the Latin Tarquinius, repeatedly occur.*

This story of the Tarquins, in whatever condition he found it, must have had a great attraction for a writer like Livy. The functions of an historical novelist were exactly to his mind; and we may be sure that he has made the most of all the picturesque points in the legend. That some of it was originally borrowed from Greek sources is plain from two instances which we happen to be able to trace. The stratagem by which young Sextus Tarquinius gets admission into the town of Gabii, in order to betray it to his father—by representing himself as a fugitive from his father's cruelty—is evidently founded upon the story which Herodotus tells, in its more romantic Eastern shape, of the strange devotion shown to King Darius by one of his generals, Zopyrus, who "cut off his ears and his nose," and presented himself in that condition at the gates of Babylon as a refugee from the cruelty of his master; to whom he opens the gates as soon as he has obtained the command of the garrison.† So again, with the subtle parable by which Tarquinius Superbus conveys his advice to his son as to his policy at Gabii. He dares not trust a verbal reply to the messenger whom Sextus has sent to ask counsel:—

"The king, as in the process of deliberation, walked out into the gardens of his palace, followed by his son's messenger. There, as he paced along in silence, he is said to have knocked off the heads of the tallest poppies with his staff. The messenger, tired at last of asking for a re-

* See Dennis, Cities of Etruria, ii. 44. † Herod. iii. 154.

ply and waiting in vain, went back to Gabii with his errand, as he considered, unsped, and related what he had said, and what the king had done. 'Whether it was anger, or personal dislike, or the innate haughtiness of his disposition, he had answered never a word.'"—(i. 54.)

The son, however, understood his father's meaning at once, and acted upon it: he was to take off the heads of all such citizens as, from their eminence, might become dangerous rivals. It is the very same story as that which Herodotus tells of the silent hint given by Thrasybulus, tyrant of Miletus, to the messenger of Periander, except that, in the Greek version, the symbolic operation takes place in a field of ripe corn.*

* Herod. v. 92.

CHAPTER III.

GROWTH OF THE REPUBLIC.

(BOOKS II.–III. B.C. 509–449.)

WE are yet on no safe historic ground. The early annals of the Republic, from whatever sources our author derived them—oral tradition, poetical romance, or prose chronicle—are manifestly as full of legends as those of the Kings. We have to receive with much caution the remarks with which Livy introduces this new period—that the birth of Roman liberty (for such he considers it) came at exactly the right moment; that the kings had done their work in the foundation and enlargement of the city; and that for the people of Rome in their ruder state such liberty would have been premature. Livy is at no time a philosophical historian, and his grounds for the conclusion in this case are so uncertain, that its value is not great. We have still to follow his narrative—with what faith we may.

The house of the Tarquins were banished from the Roman territory; their property was confiscated; their land, which lay between the city and the Tiber, was consecrated to Mars, and became the Campus

Martius; and from that time forth the bitterest accusation that could be brought against a Roman citizen was that he sought to make himself a "king." Lucius Junius Brutus and Tarquinius Collatinus were at once elected chief magistrates by the assembled people; and the annalist gives them the style and title of "Consuls"—an office which survived in name at Rome even under its emperors, long after its real authority had ceased.* But so strong was the public feeling against the whole name and race of the tyrants —"who had made of Roman citizens," men said, "labourers and stone-cutters instead of warriors," and had slain their good king Servius—that Collatinus found his own near relationship to the house fatal to his popularity. He soon resigned his office, and withdrew into voluntary exile at Lavinium. His successor Valerius, a few years later, fell under popular suspicion on similar grounds. He was building a house, men said, too grand for a private citizen: he was aiming at regal state. He had to pull down his new mansion, and even then found some difficulty in clearing himself in the eyes of the public.

The banished family, however, was not without its friends in the city. Certain of the young patricians, we are told, regretted the licence which they had enjoyed under a despotic and profligate government; and they conspired to bring the king back. The conspiracy was discovered; and amongst the guilty were two sons of the new magistrate, Brutus. All

* But the name is an anticipation; they were really called "Prætors"—Headmen—then and for many years after.

were led out to execution, the sons receiving their sentence from the lips of their father. For some reason — possibly that he doubted the story — Livy does not dwell upon a scene which offered a grand opportunity for his powers of description. He says little more than that, when the young men were bound to the stake to be "beaten with rods," as was the cruel Roman custom, previous to execution, "all eyes were watching the expression of the father's face, whose natural feelings still broke out in the midst of this discharge of his public duty."

Tarquinius now sought aid from his countrymen the Etruscans—from Veii, the old enemy of Rome, and from Tarquinii. The battle which ensued brought no decided success to either side. His son Aruns spurred his horse in front of the lines against Brutus, with a taunting challenge, which the consul did not decline; and both fell by each other's hand—the first slain in the battle. The cause of the exiles was then taken up by a chief whose name has become familiar to us in Macaulay's spirited lay, "Lars Porsena of Clusium." "Never yet had such a panic seized the senate," says the annalist; "so great was then the power of Clusium, so renowned the name of Porsena." With levies raised from all the Etruscan towns, over which he appears to have exercised a sort of suzerainty, he appeared before Rome, and made himself master of the Janiculum — the suburb outside the Tiber—at the first rush. Unless the bridge which connected it with the city proper could be at once destroyed, Porsena would be across. Then it was

that Horatius Cocles, with two comrades, volunteered to keep the enemy at bay until the bridge could be cut down. How he stood there facing the host of Etruscans—alone at last, for his two comrades had crossed, in obedience to loud warnings from their friends on the other side, as the last plank was falling —how he leapt into the Tiber, all armed as he was, and swam safe across amidst a shower of missiles—Livy has told well, and Macaulay, to our English ears, perhaps even better.

Porsena turned the siege into a blockade, and provisions grew scarce in the city. This gives occasion again for one of those anecdotes of self-devotion of which the Roman annals are full, and which Livy delights to tell. A youth of noble birth, named Mucius, obtained leave from the senate to enter the enemy's lines in disguise—"not for plunder," he said, "but for a deed of higher mark, with the help of the gods." His object was the assassination of Porsena; but, not knowing his person, and afraid to ask, he killed his secretary by mistake.

"He was moving off, making a way for himself through the crowd with his bloody weapon, when the clamour made the king's guards run up, who seized him and dragged him back. Set before the king where he sat in state, even in that imminent peril he spoke as if the king, and not he, had need to tremble. 'I am a citizen of Rome; men call me Caius Mucius. I sought to slay mine enemy. And I have as good heart to suffer death as I had to inflict it: our Roman fashion is to do and suffer stoutly. Nor is it I alone who bear in my mind this intent toward thee: there follows after me a long succession of claimants for this glory.

Wherefore prepare thyself at once for this conflict: to be in jeopardy of life from hour to hour—to find an enemy at the very threshold of thy chamber. Such is the war we Roman youth declare against thee. Thou hast not to dread the battle or the open field; the struggle for thee will be in person against each single antagonist.' When the king, alike furious with anger and alarmed at the peril, threatened him with torture by fire unless he forthwith revealed the plot at which he thus darkly hinted—'Lo here,' said he, 'that you may understand how cheap they hold all pains of the body, who see a grand renown in prospect'—and he thrust his hand into the fire on the altar just kindled for sacrifice. When he held it there to be consumed, as quite unconscious of any sense of pain, the king, wellnigh astounded at the marvel, leapt from his seat and bade him be moved away from the altar."—(ii. 12.)

Struck by such heroism, the Etruscan bade him go free; and Mucius—"by way of thanks," as Livy somewhat quaintly puts it—warned him that he was only one of three hundred Roman youths who had sworn to attempt the same deed. He was known afterwards by the surname of Scævola—Mucius "of the Left Hand."

Cold and dispassionate criticism assures us that such tales as these—the heroism of Horatius, the unflinching justice of Brutus, the devotion of Scævola—are but the romance of some forgotten poet, worked up artistically for effect, and borrowed by the annalist to colour his pages. Probably the critics are right. But these legends become history at least so far as this—they make the greatness of Rome intelligible to us; we understand how a people amongst whom such traditions of national character were current, and pro-

bably believed, should have made themselves masters of the world.

Porsena soon raised the blockade of Rome—startled by the revelations of Mucius, as the annalist would have us believe; but he confesses that the Romans had to make terms with him, in which the advantage was not wholly on their side. They refused to receive back the Tarquins; but they had to covenant to restore to Veii some of its lands of which they had taken possession after its conquest by Romulus, and to give hostages for the fulfilment of this engagement, before Porsena would withdraw his troops from the Janiculum.*

But Rome had not yet heard the last of the Tarquins. The old king had taken refuge at Tusculum, with his son-in-law Mamilius. A war which had long been brooding with the great Latin confederacy at last broke out—"thirty nations," according to the 'Annals,' having leagued under Mamilius against Rome. It was in this emergency that the Romans first had recourse to the appointment of a Dictator; in whose hands was vested an absolute authority, civil and military, the powers of the consuls passing into abeyance for the time. Young Lucius Tarquin, at the head of a body of cavalry formed of Roman exiles, fought in the ranks

* There can be little doubt but that Rome was in fact surrendered to Porsena, and had to cede to the Etruscans all her territory on the right bank of the Tiber. Tacitus distinctly says so (Hist. iii. c. 72); and Pliny mentions that the same hard conditions were laid upon the Romans as upon the Israelites by the Philistines—that they should use no iron except for implements of agriculture.

of the enemy; and in a great battle at the Lake Regillus, the aged king himself rode among them, and was wounded. The battle was long and desperate. Æbutius, "Master of the Horse,"* singled out Mamilius, who was conspicuous by his brilliant armour, and engaged him in single combat, and wounded him, but was himself disabled, and obliged to retire. So doubtful was the struggle, that Aulus Posthumius (who was then Dictator) and his staff had to dismount and fight on foot, in order to restore the steadiness of the Roman line, and to give orders to cut down every man who turned his back. At last Herminius, one of the Dictator's lieutenants, charged in person upon Mamilius, who in spite of his wound had returned into the battle, and ran him through with his spear—falling himself mortally wounded immediately after, as he was trying to strip the body. The Latins gave way, and the victory was complete, their whole camp and equipage falling into the hands of the Romans. The elder Tarquin retired to end his stormy life at Cumæ; and Rome heard no more of her "tyrants." The Dictator and his Master of the Horse returned to the city to enjoy the honours of a well-earned triumph.† A sort of negative peace with the Latins followed this defeat;

* Second only in rank to the Dictator, who was "Master of the People."

† The reader will miss, in Livy's narrative, the appearance of the "Great Twin Brethren" (Castor and Pollux), who, in Macaulay's "Lay," are seen by the Dictator charging on white horses in front of the Romans, and who appear the same evening in the city, and tell that the battle has been won. The legend is in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, vi. 13.

and a few years afterwards, when the Volscians were forming a combination against Rome, the Latins not only refused to join them, but sent the Volscian delegates as prisoners to the Romans. The latter, in their gratitude, released 600 Latins who were in their hands as prisoners of war. An amount of mutual good feeling was the result, such as never, says the historian, had existed between the Romans and the Latins before; and in the year of Rome 261 (B.C. 498), a treaty was concluded between the two nations on terms of perfect equality. This lands us upon the first safe historical ground; for the brazen pillar upon which were recorded the terms of the treaty, the names of the thirty Latin cities who were parties to it, and of the Roman consul Spurius Cassius who concluded it, was still to be seen in the time of Cicero.

But in the internal history of Rome there were now taking place events which the annalist, busy with his heroic legends, seems only to touch by the way, though they are of the greatest political importance. The "*plebs*," as they were called—the commons, as distinguished from the *populus*, the burgher-citizens—must have gradually sunk lower and lower in the social scale, until their degradation and misery became past endurance. Some inkling of the growing discontent is given us in the account of the preparations made to resist the attack of Porsena. The senate, we are told, found it necessary to secure the fidelity of the lower orders by certain concessions — particularly in the matter of the market-price of corn and the monopoly of salt. But at the date we have just reached, a new

war with the Volscians was imminent; and since the burden of it would, as the commons well knew, press with most hardship upon them, they took the opportunity to put forward their grievances somewhat boldly. The chief grievance was this,—their utter poverty compelled them from time to time to borrow money at high interest from the richer citizens, and the law of debtor and creditor at Rome was so monstrously harsh, that the debtor was liable not only to be sold into perpetual bondage, but to be starved to death in prison if his creditor chose to withhold the means of support; or even, in case of manifest insolvency, to have his body cut in pieces and divided, if there were several claimants. One sketch that is given us—though probably but a fancy picture—sets forth the condition of things, as the writer intended it should, far more graphically than any political essay:—

"A man of reverend years rushed out into the Forum bearing all the tokens of utter wretchedness. His garments were miserably squalid, his person more miserable still; his countenance was pallid, and he seemed to be wasting away with hunger. But, through all this disfigurement, he was recognised as having once held the rank of a centurion; and the spectators, while they pitied him, recounted other military distinctions which he had won. Baring his breast, he showed scars which bore witness to many a hard-fought field. When he was asked how he came to be in this miserable dress and condition, while a crowd gathered round him and formed, as it were, a regular audience, he said that while serving in the Sabine wars, not only had his fields lost their crops in the raids made by the enemy, but his homestead had been burnt, his goods and chattels plundered, and his cattle driven off; and the war-tax coming

upon him at this unlucky time, he had contracted debts. These had been swelled by exorbitant interest: first he had been stripped of the farm which his father and grandfather had held before him, then of all his other property; at last the ruin, like a plague, had reached his person. He had been thrown by his creditor, not into ordinary bondage, but into the hard-labour house and the dungeon. And he showed his back, scored with the marks of recent scourging."—(ii. 23.)

The scene and the speech may be alike imaginary, but there is no reason to question its truth as an illustration. The excitement, long pent up, was terrible. The Volscians were said to be on their march to Rome; and the commons—"so entirely," says the historian, "was the state now severed into two"—saw in them only deliverers. "The gods were coming to take vengeance on their oppressors the patricians." They refused to give in their names for enrolment in the legions. The magistrates were obliged to temporise and make promises: the commons at last fell into their ranks, marched out with the consul, and "never fought better," we are told, as the Volscians found to their cost.

But the law of debt had been relaxed only to be re-enacted more strictly. The indignant commons held nightly meetings, and again refused to enlist. The leading men in the senate were divided as to the policy to be pursued. A Dictator was appointed, who appeased the malcontents for a time by some remedial measures. But the distress and the consequent discontent still went on, until in the fifteenth year of the Republic it ended in open insurrec-

tion. The national force had been ordered to march out against the Æquians—a mere pretext, the commons thought, to get them out of the city, and so bring them under military law. They mutinied at once, and at first clamoured for the blood of the consuls. One of the more temperate leaders, Sicinius, induced them to take a milder course. Under his orders, they intrenched themselves in a position across the Anio, known as the Sacred Hill, three miles from the city, and outside the territory of the burghers. There they remained some days, and were contemplating an entire secession from Rome, and the founding of a city of their own. They were aiming, as yet, only at release from oppression, not at political power. The patricians were alarmed, and sent to treat with them, choosing, as an envoy likely to be acceptable, one Menenius Agrippa, himself of plebeian origin. His harangue to the insurgents was couched, says our author, in "the rough and primitive style of those days"—not in the polished sentences which (in the interests of good taste, as he would probably have pleaded) he usually puts into the mouths of all his speakers, plebeian and patrician alike, in the primitive days of Rome as in the days of its highest civilisation. It is possible that, in this exceptional case, we have Agrippa's speech nearly as it was spoken. He told his hearers, without any kind of preface or exposition, the now well-known fable of "The Belly and its Members." The moral was obvious — that neither section of the body politic could subsist without the other; and the warning is said to have been effectual.

The commons consented to return, on condition that hereafter their interests should be guarded by officers of their own, chosen by themselves and from among themselves, to whom there should be an appeal from any sentence of the consul, who should have free liberty of speech in defence of their order, and whose persons should be held sacred and inviolable. These new officers were called "Tribunes of the people." There was also conceded, though strangely enough Livy does not mention it, a general remission for insolvent debtors, and the release of all who were held in bondage.

Such was the first step of that gradual progress of the middle class to political power, which marks from this time the internal history of Rome. It was grudgingly recognised by the patricians, and attempts were soon made on their part to win back the ground that had been lost. A season of scarcity had followed, and a large importation of wheat from Sicily had been made by great exertions of the public officers. Caius Marcius, a successful general who had just

"Fluttered the Volscians in Corioli"—

and thus received the surname of "Coriolanus," proposed to sell this corn at a reduction to the poorer citizens, on the condition that they would renounce their newly-gained privileges. He narrowly escaped the popular fury; and the tribunes, in the exercise of their prerogative, impeached him of treason against the liberties of the people. He preferred to trust the generosity of his enemies rather than the verdict of his countrymen; and

before the day of trial came, he had taken refuge with Attius, chief of the Volscians. He encouraged that tribe to take up arms against Rome afresh; and under his able leadership they soon recovered many of their lost towns, and at last pitched their camp within five miles of Rome. The commons, still dissatisfied, showed once more an unwillingness to fight, and the senate in vain sent envoy after envoy to try to detach Coriolanus from his unnatural alliance. At last, says the legend, his wife and mother went out to entreat him: to their prayers he yielded, and drew off his legions. His new allies soon quarrelled among themselves, and Rome was saved.

Next year Spurius Cassius, who had concluded the league with the Latins, was for the third time elected consul. We are told that he now effected a peace with the Hernicans, another powerful and numerous Sabine people, who had been always more or less at war with Rome; and that, in accordance with its terms, they gave up to the Romans two-thirds of their territory. On this occasion he made a bold attempt to apply a remedy to the distress of the poorer citizens. He proposed what was then first known as an "Agrarian Law;"—not a redistribution of landed property, as the term by abuse is sometimes taken to mean, but an allotment in shares to the plebeians of such unenclosed lands belonging to the state as were at present occupied by the burghers as tenants, paying a low rental to the state as landlord. Against the opposition of his fellow-consul, he carried his measure; but with a fatal result to himself. Under the consuls

of the next year he was impeached. The terms made by him with the Latins and the Hernicans, it was said, had placed them almost on an equality with Rome: Cassius was making friends of them for his own ambitious objects. He had proposed, too, that the money lately paid for the corn from Sicily should be returned to the poorer citizens; it was a direct bidding for kingly power. The very populace were led away by this specious accusation. "So deep-rooted in their hearts was their horror of monarchy," says the author, "that they spurned the offered gift as indignantly as though they were rolling in plenty." The popular reformer, too much in advance of his age, was at once condemned and executed, and his house rased to the ground. "He shared the fate," says Arnold, "of Agis and of Marino Falieri." There was a version of the story current which sounds strange to our ears, indicating the unlimited extent of the *patria potestas* at Rome, exercised by a father even over his grown-up children; that this Roman citizen, who had thrice held the highest office in the state, was tried, scourged, and put to death by his own father sitting in domestic judgment, in accordance with his undoubted right.

Still discontent prevailed among the commons, and there was often difficulty in filling up the ranks of the legions. In one battle against their old enemies the Æquians, it was said that the infantry actually refused to fight under Kæso, an unpopular consul of the great Fabian house, and even cursed him when he had charged and routed the enemy with his cavalry alone.

It is the Fabii who at this period become the saviours

of Rome. We may feel sure that the annalist has here supplemented his scanty materials from the family chronicles of that house, in which the deeds of their ancestors would not be sparingly set forth. It will be remembered that Fabius Pictor, who was Livy's great authority, was of that line and name. Two of the name, in a battle with the men of Veii, charge alone in the front of the wavering legion, which then follows them for very shame. Another force is only saved from utter disaster by the coming up of Kæso Fabius, when the rashness of his colleague has all but lost the day. We find seven consulships in succession filled by members of the family. At last there comes the singular story which most of all, perhaps, made their name famous in Roman history. Whether it was that Kæso Fabius had made himself and his house unpopular with their own order, because he tried to carry into effect the agrarian law of Cassius by the division among the plebeians of the newly-conquered land, or whether the Fabii wished to establish an independent military colony, or whatever their real motive was, they quitted Rome in a body. Livy's own account scarcely explains the migration satisfactorily. The hostility of Veii, he says, was not so much a serious danger as a perpetual harass to Rome. Seeing this, Kæso Fabius (now for the third time consul) made a proposal in the senate as spokesman for his clan. The state had many small and troublesome wars on hand, he said: the Fabii would take that against Veii entirely on themselves, at no cost to their fellow-citizens either of blood or money. It had become almost a family business with them;

and they would undertake to make Rome safe from that quarter. So, amid the thanks of all, the consul quitted the senate-house, and summoned all of his clan to assemble under arms before his own house next day.

"Through all the city the rumour spreads: all extol the house of Fabius to the skies. 'A single family had undertaken the burden of the state; the war with Veii was turned over to private hands, as a private adventure of arms. Were there but two more houses in the city of the like strength,—let one claim the Volscians, and the other the Æquians, for their portion,—the Roman people might then enjoy peace and quiet, and all the neighbouring tribes be brought under their rule.' Next day the Fabii arm themselves, and muster at the place appointed. The consul coming forth with his war-cloak on, sees his whole clan drawn up under arms in his outer court. They open their ranks to receive him in their centre, and he gives the word to march. Never did military force march through the city streets so small in number, so great in renown and in the admiration of all beholders. Six hundred and six men-at-arms—all of gentle birth, all of one house, under the command of no one of whom need the best army of any time disdain to serve—went forth, to attempt the crushing of the people of Veii by the strength of their single clan. They were escorted not only by a body of their own kinsmen and friends, prognosticating for them nothing short of some mighty result—with intense hopes, and as intense misgivings; but also by another crowd, collected by the strong public anxiety, and deeply affected with interest and admiration. 'Go forth,' they cried, 'gallant heroes! Blessings go with you! Bring us back the success your noble enterprise deserves, then claim from us consulships and triumphs—all the rewards, all the honours we can bestow!' As they passed the Capitol, and the citadel, and the temples,

the crowd invoked every deity whose image met their eyes, or whose name occurred to their thoughts, 'to send forth that array with their blessing and favour—to restore them soon in safety to their country and their friends.' But the prayers were uttered in vain."—(ii. 49.)

They took up a position on the frontier, on the little river Cremera, some three miles from Rome, and there for two years kept garrison against Veii. Then they were surprised, and cut to pieces to a man; one young lad only escaping, to become the new founder of the house of Fabius.

The agrarian laws long continued to provoke contests between the two orders in the state—the tribunes demanding their enforcement, and the consuls resisting it. In some instances the former appear to have failed in their duty, influenced or overawed by the powerful patrician houses. In one case, a tribune who had made himself too active was found dead in his bed—murdered, it was said, by the unscrupulous opponents. At last, after many struggles, a law was carried which has been called "the second great charter of Roman liberties."* It transferred the election of the tribunes from the centuries, in which all citizens voted, to the assembly of the tribes, in which the plebeians alone had votes. It was known as the Publilian Law, from the tribune Volero Publilius, who proposed and at last carried it.

The Æquians from their strongholds in the Apennines, the Volscians from the plain and from the Alban Hills, were still pressing from time to time on the

* Arnold.

Roman territory, and finding constant occupation for its armies. The account which Livy gives of these campaigns is not only broken and confused, but cannot be reconciled either with historical probability or geographical facts. But it is plain that the close of the third century from the foundation of the city was a period of more or less disaster for Rome. Losses in war were accompanied by severe visitations of pestilence. Three times it broke out at intervals in the space of ten years, carrying off on the last occasion both the consuls of the year, two out of the four augurs, and an immense number of persons of all ranks. As in the case of the great plague at Athens, the crowding within the walls of the city of thousands of the country people, in order to escape the unchecked incursions of the enemy, made the place unhealthy, and served rapidly to spread the disease. Dr Arnold is certainly right in detecting the fact which the Roman annalist implies rather than states—that the violent dissensions between the two orders in the commonwealth led in many cases, as in that of Coriolanus (possibly also of the Fabii, as just mentioned), to political exile, either forced or voluntary. We are told that, in the year of the city 294, the Capitol was actually surprised by a night attack, and held for some days, by a large body of "exiles and slaves" headed by a Sabine named Appius Herdonius, who not only offered liberty to all slaves who would join him, but proclaimed himself generally as having come "to assert the cause of the oppressed." The consuls feared to arm the commons against them; the commons, on

their part, declared that it was a false alarm—a mere trick of their opponents to divert attention from a new law just proposed in the people's interest; and it was only when a strong force from Tusculum, which city had heard of the danger of Rome, marched in to the aid of the government, that the national troops were persuaded to make an attempt to recover the citadel. They succeeded after hard fighting, and not until the consul who led them had been killed.

The war with the Æquians at this time is made memorable by the story of Cincinnatus. A Roman army under one of the consuls was blockaded in its camp; and when the senate met in hurried council, one man's name was on the lips of all, as "the sole hope of Rome;" it was Lucius Quintius, known as "Cincinnatus," from his "crisped" hair. Of his previous history the annalist tells us not enough to explain what it was which made the eyes of all his countrymen turn to him in the hour of danger. He and his son Kæso had been amongst the bitterest opponents of the claims of the plebeians, who had succeeded in getting the latter banished on a charge of murder. The father is now found ploughing on his little farm of some three acres, stripped to his work; and the state messenger bids him clothe himself, that he may listen to the senate's commands in decent guise. He is saluted on the spot as Dictator—sole and absolute governor of Rome and her armies; and is conducted to the city, where he is received with shouts of acclamation,—the plebeians, however, still looking on him with some forebodings, as a man who had irresponsible

authority, and looked likely to use it to the full. He takes the field at once, blockades the blockading enemy, reduces them to surrender, makes them all pass under the yoke, and lays down his dictatorship, after a rule of sixteen days. It is a marvellous story, and must be left as the annalist tells it. One point in it, even if literally true, may not be nearly so extraordinary as it seems. That the man who was chosen to take the supreme power at Rome should have been cultivating a small farm may probably be a more accurate picture of Roman life, in those early times, than the grander figures of Roman magistrates and commanders which Livy transferred from his own days to those of the infant republic.

The commons had by this time gained an important step towards independence by the passing of the Icilian Law, by which so much of the Aventine Hill as remained unenclosed was lotted out to them in freehold: and the burgher-citizens, who had hitherto enjoyed the occupation of it under the state, had to give up their holdings,—for which, however, they were to receive compensation. But a larger and more important measure of reform, which had been brought forward by the tribunes (whose number had been now increased to ten) from year to year, and as often postponed owing to the determined opposition of the burghers, was now about to be carried. A "bill"—as we should term it—had been introduced by Terentilius, which was in effect to give Rome a new constitution. It was proposed to choose ten commissioners—five from the burgher-citizens and five from

the commons—who should draw up a code of constitutional, civil, and criminal law; and so set at rest for ever all questions in dispute between the two parties in the state. At last, after a contest of ten years, the bill was carried—but with a very important modification; all ten of the commissioners were to be chosen from the burgher class. Another fatal outbreak of pestilence, which carried off one of the consuls, four of the tribunes, and "threw very many noble families into mourning"—to say nothing of its ravages in humbler quarters, of which the annalist does not take much account—had perhaps softened political asperities. But it was a fatal concession on the part of the plebeian order, so far as the result was concerned.

Three senators had been sent into Greece, to examine the celebrated laws of Solon, and also the legislative systems of other states, with a view to the drawing up of a Roman code. The Commission of Ten was elected; and all other public magistracies, consuls and tribunes included, seem for the time to have been placed in abeyance. The Ten began their work, and in a few months presented the result in ten tables of statutes, on which they invited public criticism and corrections. They were adopted, and "remain to this day," says Livy, "the main foundation of all public and private law." We should have been thankful to him had he given us some notion of their contents; but this kind of constitutional history was not to his mind, and only some four or five enactments in the code are known to us from references in

the works of Cicero. But it was reported—or the Ten allowed it to be understood—that two more tables were yet needed to complete their work; and for this purpose it was proposed to continue the Commission, subject to a new election of its component members, for a second year. To this the plebeians willingly assented; for by this time "they hated the name of consul almost as much as that of king."

The leading spirit both in the old and new Commission was Appius Claudius. He is probably the same man (though the annalist puts him a generation lower) who, twenty years before, as consul, had been so hated by the army whom he led against the Volscians that whole companies threw away their arms and refused to fight; in punishment for which, with the support of the Latin and Hernican troops, and the stancher burgher-companies, he had inflicted death on every officer whose company had fled, and decimated the ranks of the defaulters. Not for this ostensibly—for the severity was warranted by Roman discipline—but on other charges, he had been brought to trial when his year of office had expired, but had in some way escaped. He now took every means to ingratiate himself with the commons, in order to secure his re-election amongst the Ten. In this he succeeded, as well as in procuring that most of his new colleagues should be of the ultra-aristocratic party.

Then, says Livy, Appius threw off the mask, and showed himself what he was, and taught his colleagues all the insolence of power. They appeared in public all at once with twelve lictors each, whereas in their first

year of office they had been content with one. "A hundred and twenty lictors filled the forum; they looked like ten kings"—says the annalist, to mark as strongly as possible the effect upon the public. Their whole behaviour was one course of insult and oppression. They brought out the two additional tables of statutes—but it would appear that these contained enactments wholly unlike in spirit to those which had been issued first.*

When this second year of office was drawing to its close, nothing was heard of any coming election of consuls or tribunes, and it appeared that the Decemvirs had no thought of resigning their power. They surrounded themselves with bands of young patricians, and treated the commons with more insolence than ever. Meanwhile the Roman territory was being laid waste by incursions of the Sabines and the Æquians. A meeting of the senate was held, in which some plain speaking was used towards the new masters of Rome. Valerius demanded permission to speak "on the question of the Republic;" and when this was refused, protested amidst great confusion that he would "go to the commons." Horatius Barbatus denounced the Decemvirs as the "Ten Tarquins," and reminded them that a Valerius and an Horatius had once already taken their part in ridding Rome of tyrants. Valerius declared that he was not to be cowed by the terrors of "imaginary rods and axes,"—implying that the as-

* Cicero (De Rep. ii. 37) says that these supplementary tables contained laws that were highly invidious; for instance, declaring marriages between patricians and plebeians illegal.

sumption by the Ten of these emblems of power was illegal. Appius ordered his instant arrest; Valerius rushed to the steps of the senate-house, and loudly claimed the protection of the people; and the quarrel was with difficulty appeased by some of the other senators, who dreaded nothing so much as a popular revolution. Generals were nominated for the campaign against the Æquians and Sabines; but the troops were sullen and disaffected. The result was a defeat in both quarters; and watch and ward had to be kept in the city by day and night, in expectation of an attack from the victorious enemy.

The measure of the insolence of the Ten is said to have been filled up at last, as in the case of the Tarquins, by an outrage upon a woman's honour. Appius had cast his wicked eyes upon the young daughter of a centurion named Virginius, now serving with the army. He suborned a creature of his own to claim her as his escaped bond-slave; she was only the supposititious child, he affirmed, of Virginius. Her friends protested, and appealed to the law. The case was heard —before Appius as magistrate. He made a show of justice: the matter should stand over until Virginius returned from service. Then, if he could prove she was his legitimate daughter, well: meanwhile she must remain in the safe custody of the master who had sworn to her as his property. The meaning of this was only too plain. Her friends and the whole of the crowded court loudly expressed their indignation. Her betrothed bridegroom, no less a person than Icilius, who when tribune had carried the law for the

allotment of the Aventine to the commons—a man of quiet temper, says Livy, but now stung into fury—broke through the crowd, and defied Appius on the judgment-seat. After a few bitter words, the Decemvir thought it prudent so far to give way, as to promise to await the arrival of the father on the morrow—which he had taken steps, as he hoped, to prevent. But Virginius got the news, and travelling all the night, reached Rome next morning. Putting on a mourning dress, he went down with his daughter to the court in the Forum, solemnly warning his fellow-citizens that his cause was that of the republic. Surrounded by a strong guard of retainers, Appius did not fear to give his iniquitous judgment in brief terms—he was satisfied that the girl was a slave: her master must take her. The Roman women crowded round to protect her: the father raised his voice in loud and bitter protest against this crowning outrage on the liberty of Roman citizens. Appius charged him and Icilius with meditating revolution, and bade his lictors clear a way through the crowd for the master to take away his slave. But nothing can give the rest of the story so well as Livy's own words.

"When Appius had thundered forth these words in his overflowing passion, the crowd gave way without resistance, and the maiden stood deserted by all, a helpless prey to injustice. Then Virginius, when he saw no aid was to be looked for, said: 'I pray thee, Appius, first, to make allowance for a father's feelings, if I have said aught too bitter

against thee ; then, suffer me to question this nurse, in the maiden's presence, as to the facts of this matter ; so, if I have been wrongly called her father, I can part from her with a lighter heart.' Leave was given : he led the girl and her nurse aside, near what are now called the New Booths, and there, seizing a knife from a butcher, he cried, 'Thus, my daughter, in the only way I can, I make thee free!' Then he stabbed her to the heart ; and lifting his eyes to the tribunal, said—'Thee and thy life, Appius, I consecrate to destruction in this blood!' Roused by the cries which followed on this deed of horror, Appius bade his men seize Virginius. But he cleared a way for himself with the knife as he went ; and so, protected also by a body of young men who escorted him, reached the city gate. Then Icilius and Numitorius lifted up the lifeless corpse, and showed it to the people. They spoke of the wickedness of Appius, the beauty of the maiden which had been so fatal to her, the hard necessity of the father. The matrons followed the body, crying repeatedly, 'Was it for this they bore children? Was such the reward of maiden chastity?'"—(iii. 48.)

The men called loudly for the restoration of the tribunate, the safeguard of their liberties. In vain did Appius order the arrest of Icilius. The indignant people found new and powerful leaders in the senators Valerius and Horatius ; and Appius had to fly for his life from the Forum.* The legions took up the popu-

* Nothing can more admirably represent the whole spirit of this pathetic episode than Macaulay's lay of "Virginia." The subject was naturally a tempting one to the dramatists ; and it has been worthily treated both by Alfieri and Sheridan Knowles.

lar cause, and refused any longer to obey the Decemvirs' orders. Both armies marched to Rome, and seized the Aventine Hill, the home of the commons; and each elected ten "Tribunes of the Soldiers" to protect their rights. There was some delay in negotiations with the jealous patricians; whereupon the commons left the city in a body, and remembering what their forefathers had done forty-five years before, established themselves once more on the "Sacred Hill." * They demanded not only the restoration of the tribunate, and indemnity for all the leaders of the revolution—they clamoured to have the Ten given up to them, "that they might burn them with fire." † They were at last satisfied with the permission to impeach them, which was done under the new administration. Appius and another of his colleagues committed suicide rather than abide their trial; the rest were exiled; and "the shade of Virginia, happier in her death than in her life," says the annalist who was more than half a poet, "was at length appeased."

It is but a legend, the critics tell us, touching and pathetic, but far too artistically proportioned to be true. Their judgment may be right; but history, like life, is all the more beautiful for its illusions. The story of Virginia may be only the composition of a

* See p. 40.

† Machiavelli's remark on this is amusing in its cool cynicism. The people made a mistake, he says, on this occasion. They were quite right in their demand that the Decemvirs should be given up to them; but they were wrong in explaining "*pourquoi*."

professional reciter, its details selected and harmonised from a dozen current stories of the tyranny of the Decemvirate; the revolution may have had far deeper and wider roots than a father's or a lover's vengeance; but again it is true at least so far as this,—it was men like Virginius that made the liberties of Rome.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE DECEMVIRATE TO THE SACK OF ROME BY THE GAULS.

(BOOKS III.–V. B.C. 449–390.)

THE revolution ended in the restoration of the old magistracies. Ten tribunes were elected, Virginius, Icilius, and Numitorius standing first. The choice for the consulship fell by acclamation upon the two senators who had stood forth as champions of the national liberties—Valerius and Horatius. They were in fact the first who properly bore the name of "consul," for the term can only have been applied by anticipation to the earlier chief magistrates, whose real designation was "prætor." The election was not regarded altogether with favour by the aristocratic party, since it was considered that both the new consuls, in their dealings with the commons, had somewhat betrayed the interests of their own order; and the senate showed its jealousy in refusing them the usual honour of a triumph, when they soon after defeated the Sabines and Æquians in the campaign of the year. The triumph was held notwithstanding, on the demand of the tribunes, which the senate were unable to resist;

though one of the speakers was bold enough to protest that it was "a triumph gained over the senate, not over the enemy." But the defeat of the Sabines at least must have been complete, since we hear of no movements on their part for a hundred and fifty years.

The military events of this period are of no great importance otherwise, though we find the usual border hostilities going on from time to time. The political changes are of much higher interest; and of these the annalist's account is, as usual, confused and unsatisfactory. What may be clearly traced through it all is the progress of the commons to political power. The consul Valerius succeeded in passing two laws; one to the effect that it should be treason to propose the election of any magistrate from whose sentence there should not be right of appeal; and the other to place a *plebiscitum*—a decree of the commons—on the same footing as one passed by the burghers in their centuries. It would appear also from other authorities —and there are indications of it in these 'Annals'— that it was arranged that in future one consul should be chosen from the plebeians, but that as yet this was seldom carried out. There now appear also from time to time, instead of the two consuls, new magistrates called "Tribunes of the Soldiers," uncertain in number, who were to be elected from both orders alike. Probably it was intended that these should exercise the military functions of the consuls, whose civil powers were transferred to two other new magistrates called Censors, who were to settle the roll of the

senate, to fix the rank of every individual in the state according to his property, and to manage the state revenues. This office was reserved for patricians alone; and it gave its holders so much influence, and conferred upon them so much of almost regal state, that the patrician Mamercus Æmilius won himself a great name for patriotism, when he proposed and carried the limitation of the appointment to eighteen months instead of the original term of five years. Another important social step towards the placing the two orders of citizens on something like equality was the legalising for the future (by the law of Canuleius) of marriages contracted between a patrician and a plebeian.

An event occurred a few years afterwards which caused great public excitement, and threatened to break the comparatively peaceful relations which were now existing. During a year of great scarcity, a rich plebeian named Spurius Mæliuś, whose wealth gave him a place among the knights—he was a contractor, or something of the kind—began either to give away, or sell at a very low price to the poorer citizens, a quantity of corn which he had got in from Etruria. Whether the burghers were jealous of his consequent popularity, or whether they really believed it, they raised against him the fatal cry that he was seeking to make himself a king.* The consuls of the year seem to have been either timid or incapable. They sent

* Arnold keenly observes that "charity was so little familiar to the Greeks and Romans, that the splendid magnificence of Mælius is in itself suspicious."

again for the one man whom apparently all Rome held to be infallible—Quinctius Cincinnatus, now some eighty years old. He was made Dictator, and named Servius Ahala, a man apparently of his own mould, his "Master of the Horse." Mælius was summoned to appear before the Dictator; he refused to come; and when the officer tried to arrest him, he rushed into the midst of the crowd and appealed to them for protection. A riot seemed imminent; and the Master of the Horse, who was supported by a strong force ("of young patricians," according to Livy), cut him down on the spot. The stern old Dictator formally pronounced it "justifiable homicide." The tribunes persisted in representing it as nothing more or less than a political murder. His house was ordered to be rased to the ground as the property of a traitor, and its site was known ever after as the "Mælian Level;" but how far he was or was not the traitor which the annalist makes him out to be, we shall never know.

The strong town of Fidenæ, some five or six miles from Rome, had put itself under the protection of Veii, and its final subjection (for it had been taken and retaken more than once) was the first addition of real importance made to the Roman dominion, which from this time forth began its course of rapid extension. Veii itself, which had withstood its powerful neighbour so long, was soon to fall. Hitherto the wars between Rome and her neighbours had been little more than border raids, her force a mere field militia, the campaign lasting, at the most, a few months; but in B.C. 406, Veii, a strong town with walls of the

solid Etruscan masonry, was regularly blockaded, by a double line of circumvallation, as Livy's words would seem to imply, but more probably by something like a chain of detached forts, with the view of cutting off from it all succour and supplies,—which, however, was only partially successful. Then for the first time, apparently, a Roman force was expected to keep the field during the winter; and it was not without strong remonstrance on the part of the tribunes that so unpopular a requisition was submitted to. The siege is said to have lasted ten years, like the siege of Troy; but the details of it given by the annalist can hardly be considered historical. A great defeat of the blockading force is recorded in the last year of the siege, by the men of Capenæ and Falerii, who came to help their neighbours; the report of it was exaggerated by panic, and there was terrible consternation at Rome. Then, we are told, "the leader predestined by the Fates to destroy the hostile city and to save his country, Marcus Furius Camillus," was named Dictator; and we may suspect at once, with Niebuhr and other keen historical inquirers, that we are indebted for much that follows to the family chronicles of the house of the Furii. Camillus at once attacks and defeats the allies of Veii, takes both their camps, restores discipline amongst the Roman troops, draws his lines closer, drives a mine under the walls right into the heart of the city, and sends to Rome to announce that Veii is ready to fall, and to ask what he shall do with the expected spoil. The Roman populace are invited to set out in a body to share it; a

tenth only being reserved by the conqueror as an offering to Apollo. And here follows a circumstantial story which Livy himself considers as "fabulous:" that the mine was ready to be sprung, right under the temple of Juno; that the king of Veii was there offering sacrifice, when the soothsayer exclaimed that the man who presented on the altar the entrails of that victim should win the victory. The words were heard by the Romans in the mine; they broke through, seized the victim, and handed the entrails to their general: and so the words came true.

Veii was taken and given up to plunder, and its inhabitants sold for slaves. Great was the joy of the Romans, and no honours were thought too great for the conqueror. Never had such a triumph been seen at Rome. Camillus had his chariot drawn by four white horses; but there were not wanting curious tongues which said such display was neither good precedent in a Roman citizen, nor becoming in a mortal man; it was usurping to himself the privileges of Jove and of the Sun. If Camillus did take to himself any unbecoming honour, it is not in harmony with the prettier story which Livy gives briefly, and Dionysius at more length—that when he recognised the greatness of his victory, so far beyond all hope and expectation, he lifted his hands to heaven and prayed, "that if in the sight of gods or men his own and the Roman people's good fortune seemed too great, the compensating evil might fall upon him in his own person, and not on his fellow-citizens and his country." As he turned round (so ran the story) he

stumbled and fell; and some men, "judging by the event"—as such things commonly are judged—interpreted the omen of the downfall of Camillus himself, and some of the disaster which was in a few years to come upon Rome.

The campaign against Veii is marked by two distinct steps in the internal history of Rome, which the annalist passes over somewhat lightly, but which are of more importance than many of the petty wars which he is careful to record, and probably much more authentic than the story of Veii. Then, for the first time, was the question of war, "by the perseverance of the tribunes," referred to the people in their centuries; whereas hitherto a decree of the senate had been held sufficient. And in this war, for the first time, was regular pay given to the troops on service.

Falerii fell soon after, before the same conqueror; who, when he had laid down his dictatorship, was chosen one of the Tribunes of the Soldiers. We are still perhaps in the domain of fable, when we are asked to believe the story of the schoolmaster who, taking out his pupils—sons of the chief men of Falerii—for exercise outside the walls, offered to betray them into the hands of the Roman general, and was sent back by him into the town with his hands tied behind him, and injunctions to his scholars to flog him all the way; at which act of generosity the men of Falerii were so charmed that they voluntarily gave up the city to so magnanimous a captain. Whether any such episode did or did not take place, it is tol-

erably certain that Camillus did not address the wretched schoolmaster in the neat and appropriate rhetorical speech which our author has composed for him.* But Falerii fell, and other towns soon after; and the Romans reached the Ciminian Hills—"the extreme natural boundary of the basin of the Tiber on the side of Etruria." But we must not overrate the extent of their early conquests; as yet no Roman army had marched more than fifty miles from Rome.

Camillus had meanwhile fallen into disgrace. The plunder of Veii had been distributed before the tithe which he had vowed to Apollo had been set apart; and there was a great amount of discontent when this was demanded from the holders afterwards. He became the object of popular jealousy and dislike. He was accused of having secreted for himself part of the plunder. There can, however, be little doubt but that his strong opposition to the popular party, and especially to their project of colonising Veii, as recorded by Livy, was the chief reason for their enmity. The discontented commons proposed to form at Veii as it were a second Rome; and in its lands, which they declared were more fertile than those round the older city, they saw a new state demesne which could be allotted to themselves. The conservative senators resisted it as almost an impiety to their ancestral gods. The quarrel grew so bitter, that Camillus was impeached by one of

* The reader will appreciate M. Taine's playful criticism: "Le pauvre pedagogue a trouvé son maître: il écoute une leçon de rhétorique, avant d'être reconduit à la ville de la manière que chacun sait."

the tribunes; and rather than stand a trial in which he may have felt that judgment had been passed beforehand, he went into voluntary exile; praying, says the annalist, as he left the city, that "if he were innocent, and wrong was being done him in that matter, his ungrateful countrymen might soon be made to feel his loss."

If we are still reading the chronicles of the Furii, the historiographer of that illustrious house must have had many of the qualifications of an excellent dramatist. The Romans were soon to pay the penalty of their ingratitude, and Furius Camillus was to take an heroic revenge. Tidings came from Clusium that a new enemy was threatening not Rome only, but all civilised Italy. A voice had been heard in the night, near the temple of Vesta, warning the guardians of the city that "the Gauls were at hand"—those truculent barbarians, naked to the waist, whose tall persons, cold steel-blue eyes, and long yellow hair and moustache, so utterly different from the Italian type, the Romans to the last could never look upon without dread and dislike. The Gauls, who had long since driven out the Etruscans from the rich plains of the Po, had now crossed the Apennines, and had appeared in force before Clusium. The Romans sent three commissioners to watch their movements; but it was scarcely the custom of the times or of the Romans—and still less the temper of the house of Fabius, to which these officers belonged—to watch a fight without taking part in it. Quintus Fabius killed with his own hand a Gaulish captain, and was recognised for a

Roman while he was stripping the body. Indignant at this breach of the law of nations, the Gauls sent to Rome to demand the surrender of the three Fabii. The Romans refused; "they knew the demand of the barbarians was fair," we are told, "but the influence of a noble house was too powerful;" and the invading horde broke up from Clusium, and marched upon Rome. No preparations had been made; and while the country people fled before the rapid sweep of this new enemy, and filled the city with terror and confusion, some hastily-gathered levies marched out to check their advance, and met them on the little stream called Allia, about eleven miles from Rome. "Without sacrifices, without auspices," says the Roman historian, anxious to account for the unfortunate issue, they drew up their line and engaged—only to meet what he confesses was a complete and shameful defeat. Some were drowned in the Tiber, some fled to Rome, and more to Veii, to avoid crossing the river. We are told that in the general confusion the fugitives who reached Rome did not even stop to shut the city gates, but at once took shelter in the citadel.

The whole story of the sacking of Rome by the Gauls is little better than a romance; yet Livy's version of it, founded probably on the family annals of the Furii and Manlii, cannot be omitted. Like some similar stories in English history, it is likely to retain its place in the memory when drier facts are forgotten.

The Gauls, say these Annals, reached the walls of Rome on the evening of the battle. But the open gates, and the unnatural quiet, awed them; they feared

a stratagem, and put off their entrance till the morning. They met with no resistance; all who could bear arms had shut themselves in the Capitol, with their wives and children: the priest of Quirinus (the deified Romulus), and the Vestal Virgins, who had charge of the Eternal Fire, had buried some of the sacred images, and carried the rest for safety to the little town of Cære. Such of the lower orders as were not trained to arms were bid to shift for themselves, and most of them at once dispersed into the country. The older senators and patricians announced their intention of meeting death where they were—they would not burden the defenders of the Capitol, they said, with the maintenance of their useless bodies. Some say that by a solemn formula they devoted their lives for Rome. So, when the Gauls entered the Forum by the Colline Gate, and spread themselves to plunder, they saw a strange sight.

"The houses of the lower orders were shut up, but the halls of the chief men stood open; and they hesitated more at entering these than at breaking open such as were closed against them. Thus it was not without a certain awe and reverence that they beheld, sitting in the vestibules of their houses, figures which not only in their costume and decorations, whose magnificence seemed to their eyes more than mortal, but in the majesty of their looks and bearing, were like unto gods. While they stood fixedly regarding them as though they were statues, a Gaul is said to have stroked the beard, worn long as it was in those days, of one of them, Marcus Papirius, who smote him on the head with his ivory staff, and woke his wrath; with that began a general massacre, and the rest were killed where they sat."—(v. 41.)

The city was sacked and burnt; but the citadel held out. Part of the host stayed to blockade it, while the rest spread themselves over the country to plunder. One division attacked the town of Ardea. There Camillus was "growing grey in exile—inveighing against gods and men, and asking where were the men who had fought with him at Veii and Falerii, who were always brave at least, if not always successful?" He roused the men of Ardea to a night attack upon the barbarians, and cut them to pieces. "Friends and enemies declared alike that there was nowhere to be found a warrior like Camillus." The Roman fugitives collected at Veii, and took heart, and named the hero of the times once more Dictator.

But before he could reach Rome, says the story, weaker counsels had prevailed. The Gauls had discovered a way to climb the steep of the Capitol; and, but for those wakeful geese who have passed into a proverb, and the heroism of Manlius, who dashed his shield in the face of the leader of the escalade, and hurled him down upon his ascending comrades, the last stronghold of the Romans would have been taken. Still the blockade went on; but the famine was sore among the defenders, and at last they were fain to bribe their invaders, who were themselves dying in heaps from pestilence, to take a ransom in gold and depart. Then the barbarians brought false weights; and when the Roman officer protested, their chief, or "Brennus," as they called him,* insultingly threw his

* The name is plainly not an appellative: it is the Celtic *Bran* or Cymric *Brenhin*, a chief or king.

sword into the scale, and gave no explanation beyond the words, "Woe to the conquered!" But, said the legends in conclusion, before the disgraceful bargain had been concluded, the great Dictator marched in from Veii, bade the gold be taken back, and told his countrymen to remember that Rome must be ransomed not with gold but steel. He drove the Gauls out of the city, defeated them in two great battles, destroyed their camp, and "not a man was left to carry home the news of their disaster.

Such is the story told by Livy; evidently so coloured and exaggerated, to enhance the glory of Camillus and to save the wounded honour of Rome, that all attempts to rectify the history, and sift the truth out of the fiction, are more ingenious than satisfactory. Through it all there stands out the great fact that Rome was taken and burnt, and the Capitol held to ransom; and there is every reason to suppose that the Gauls got clear off with most of their plunder. How great must have been the devastation made by such an inroad we might readily imagine, even if we did not collect sufficient intimation of it from the pages of Livy. He tells us how the buildings in the city were so utterly ruined, that the mass of the people would have deserted them for ever, had not every patriotic argument and every religious sentiment been appealed to. Once more—and this time perhaps with better reason—the cry was raised for a general migration to Veii; and Camillus, still the controlling spirit in all emergencies of war and state, had to implore his fellow-citizens not to desert the gods and

altars of their native city. Rome had prospered, he reminded them, only so long as she had been mindful of her sacred trust. The words which Livy has put into his mouth are surely the expression of the writer's own intense love for Rome and Italy.

"We hold a city founded under auspices and with solemn inauguration; there is no spot within its walls that is not full of a divine presence and hallowed associations. The days on which our great sacrifices recur are not more strictly fixed than the places where they are to be offered. Will you desert all these objects of adoration, public and private, my fellow-citizens? . . . Some will say, perhaps, that we can fulfil these sacred duties at Veii, or send our own priests from thence to perform them here. Neither can be done without breaking our religious obligations. What shall I say of the Eternal Fire of Vesta, and of that Image * preserved in the guardianship of her temple as the pledge of our empire? What of your sacred shields, O great Mars and Father Quirinus? Is it your will to forsake and leave to desecration all these hallowed symbols, old as the city herself, some even older than her foundation? . . . I speak of ceremonies, and of temples—what shall I say of those who guard them? Your Vestals have one only seat, whence nothing but the capture of the city ever yet moved them. The Priest of Jupiter may not lawfully pass a single night outside the city walls. Will you make these ministers of Veii instead of Rome?

"If in this whole city no better or more commodious dwelling could be erected than that hut in which our Founder lived,—were it not better to live in huts like shepherds and peasants, amidst your own shrines and household gods, than go into this national exile? . . .

* The Palladium—the wooden image of Pallas, asserted to have been brought by Æneas from Troy.

Does our affection for our native place depend on walls and beams? For mine own part, when I was late in exile, I confess that as often as my native city came into my thoughts, there rose before my eyes all this,—these hills, these plains, yon Tiber, and the scene so familiar to my sight, and the bright sky under which I was born and brought up. O Roman countrymen! rather let these things move you now, by the love you bear them, to stay where you are, than wring your hearts with regret for them hereafter! Not without cause did gods and men fix on this spot to found a city: health-giving hills, a river nigh at hand, to bring in food from all inland places, to receive supplies by sea; the sea itself handy for commerce, yet not so near as to expose the city to hostile fleets; a spot central to all Italy, adapted beyond all others for the growth of a great state."—(v. 54.)

The appeal was successful, and the citizens began to rebuild. We are told (though here we have probably some exaggeration) that every public monument was destroyed, and every record burnt; that the very sites of the temples were in many cases hard to trace; and that the streets were choked with the charred and blackened heaps of what had once been houses, so that a man could hardly recognise where his own dwelling had stood, while ruin and desolation were spread for miles beyond the city walls. Even when the people had with difficulty been persuaded to undertake the task of rebuilding their dwellings, the borrowing of money at high interest brought about the old difficulty of hopeless debt. The war-tax was doubled, which pressed with additional severity on a decreasing population. Rome was thrown back almost

to its condition a century before. And, to crown the public embarrassment, the subject-allies who had remained stanch to Rome ever since the treaty of Spurius Cassius, the Latins and Hernicans, took advantage of her lowered fortunes to assert again their independence.

CHAPTER V.

CONQUEST OF LATIUM.

(BOOKS VI.–VIII. B.C. 390–338.)

WHATEVER gloss the Roman annalists may have put upon the actual facts of the terrible struggle with the Gauls, the coldest historical judgment must confess that Rome is never grander than in her misfortunes. The city was rebuilt; new immigrants—from Veii, from Capenæ, from Falerii—were admitted to the rights of citizenship, to supply the gaps made in their ranks by the last fatal war; the numbers must have been even augmented by this process, for we are told that four new tribes were added to the twenty-one.

Camillus fills the stage still. He gains fresh victories over the Volscians, and over a new Etruscan federation,—for the adversity of Rome was the opportunity for all her hostile neighbours; even the Latins and Hernicans, as has been said, hastened to renounce her alliance, not only refusing the usual contingent of men, but even supplying aid to the enemy. The details of the various minor wars, as given by Livy, cannot be trusted; but it is plain from subsequent events that Rome was able to hold her

own. The Latins and Hernicans, seeing things going against them, sent to repudiate the act of their citizens who had been found fighting in the ranks of the Volscians, and to claim that such of them as had been taken prisoners (many were of high rank) should be handed over to their own government for punishment. The senate sternly bid the envoys betake themselves at once "out of the sight of the Roman people:" they would not guarantee to rebels, they said, the immunity of ambassadors.

But while Rome thus bravely maintained her honour against external enemies, though not without some narrowing of her borders for the time, her internal condition was one of great suffering for the larger class of her citizens, on whom the pressure of debt and taxation was weighing more heavily from day to day. Again, whether from generous impulse or selfish ambition, one of her distinguished citizens put himself forward as the champion of the oppressed; and again, rightfully or wrongfully, he was charged with seeking to make himself a king. Manlius, known as "Capitolinus," from his late heroic defence of the Capitol, was jealous—so said his enemies—of the honours of Camillus: was indignant, he said himself, at the sufferings of the honest commons. One day he saw—what was no uncommon sight at Rome—an unfortunate debtor being hurried off by his creditor to end his days in the "hard-labour-house," or possibly by starvation. In this case the man was an old officer, whose services were known. Manlius stopped him, and paid the debt on the spot, not without some rhetorical de-

clamation (in which we hear Livy's voice, and not Manlius's) against the oppression of the poor by the rich, and his own great deeds, and his sympathy with an old fellow-soldier. He followed up this popular act by others even more liberal; he sold his lands, and advanced the money without interest to those who were in debt, until it was said that more than four hundred owed their liberty to him. Men hailed him as the "Father of the Commons." Crowds followed his steps in public, and waited at his doors. He excited their feelings yet more by openly asserting that these patricians, not content with enjoying the use of all the public lands, and living on the hard labour of their poor debtors, had secreted the gold which had been recovered from the Gauls; "he knew where the money was, and would tell them some day."

Cossus had already been appointed Dictator—partly in view of this perilous state of things—and he was now hurriedly recalled from the army to Rome. He summoned Manlius before him, and called upon him for proof of his slanderous charges. The speech which the annalist assigns to Manlius by way of defence was certainly, if it was spoken, as revolutionary as a speech could be. "He was well aware that the nomination of a Dictator was meant as a weapon against himself and the commons, not against a foreign enemy. Did they ask why he put himself forward alone as the champion of the people? They might as well ask why he alone had saved the Capitol. They required him to tell them where the gold was that had been taken from the Gauls;—why ask what they all so very well

knew? He, at all events, would give no information of the kind at the bidding of his enemies." He was arrested and thrown into prison, appealing loudly to all the gods against this ingratitude and injustice. Popular as he was, there was no attempt at riot. The annalist, in spite of his evident sympathy with the patrician party, pays a remarkable tribute to the Roman populace: one might almost think he was speaking of an English mob. "They had an invincible respect," he says, "for legitimate authority." No man questioned the order of the Dictator. But numbers of the people went into mourning, and crowds gathered round the gates of the prison where the popular hero was confined. The senate tried to appease the public excitement by an expedient which they hoped would win for them a counter-popularity—a distribution of the lands of the town of Satrium, recently recovered; and two thousand settlers were sent out to occupy them: but this only drew forth the taunt, that it was meant to bribe them into the desertion of their favourite. So threatening was the appearance of things that Manlius was released.

This concession did but encourage the malcontents. Manlius held meetings—some at night—in which his language is reported as seditious in the highest degree. He reminded his partisans of the fate of those patriotic martyrs, Spurius Cassius and Mælius: he called upon them to rid themselves, once for all, of consuls and dictators; it was the commons who ought to rule. He was the champion of the commons: if there were any higher style and title with which they chose to invest

their leader, let them employ it, if so they could better gain their ends! Such an expression was certainly plain enough. Manlius was at once impeached. So terrible was this charge of "making himself a king," that for that reason, probably, it was remarked how he was attended at his trial by no crowd of friends in mourning, as was the usual custom; not even did his two brothers take their places by his side. For the same reason, even the commons were now ready to condemn him.

"When the day of trial came, I cannot ascertain from any authority what was brought against him by his accusers that had to do with his aiming at royal power, beyond the crowds he collected round him, his seditious language, his largesses, and the false charge he had made. But I cannot doubt that the evidence on that point was strong, because the hesitation of the people to condemn him lay not in the case itself, but in the place of trial. That fact seems worthy of remark, that men may understand how the greatest and most brilliant public services may become not only thankless but even hateful, when joined with that accursed lust for power. He is said to have brought forward nearly four hundred men whom he had supplied with money free of interest, whose goods he had saved from public sale, and whose persons from imprisonment. Added to this, he is said not only to have recited the honours he had gained in the field, but to have displayed them to public view;—spoils stripped from slain enemies to the number of thirty, as many as forty personal rewards from his commanders, among which were conspicuous two 'mural' and eight 'civic' crowns.* More than this, he

* The "mural" for being the first to enter the enemy's works; the "civic" for saving the life of a comrade.

brought forward the fellow-citizens whose lives he had saved from the enemy, naming among them, though not present, C. Servilius, Master of the Horse. And when he had recounted all his services in war, in glowing language corresponding to the brilliancy of his exploits, he bared his breast, scarred all over with wounds received in battle. Turning his eyes from time to time to the Capitol, he called on Jove and the other powers there to aid him at his need, and prayed them to inspire the people of Rome with the same spirit, in this his day of peril, which they had given him to protect that Capitol for the Roman people's deliverance; and implored those who heard him, one and all, to look on the Capitol and its fortress, to bethink them of the immortal gods, and so give their judgment."—(vi. 20.)

They could not condemn him, says the story, where he stood in the Campus Martius, still stretching out his hands towards the rock which towered above them; the court broke up, and met next day outside the city gates, in a spot whence the Capitol could not be seen, and there adjudged him to death. He was thrown from the Tarpeian rock, the place he had defended. "Such was the end," says the annalist, "of a man who had been worthy of all remembrance, had he not been born a citizen of a free city"—that is, a city which would not hear the name of "king." All parties seem to have thought him guilty of this treason to the commonwealth, at the time: even his own family made a vow that none of them henceforth should bear the name of Marcus; but when a pestilence followed next year, no wonder that the repentant commons said it came as the avenger of Marcus Manlius.

The pressure of debt and consequent poverty still

continued, and it became plain, even to the moderate men of the patrician party, that some remedial measures were absolutely necessary. According to Livy, an exhibition of female jealousy gave the first impulse to the struggle which ended in the most substantial victory yet won by the commons. Two sisters of the great house of the Fabii had married,—one a patrician, who was a military tribune; the other a plebeian, Licinius Stolo, rich and distinguished, but still of the unprivileged order. The younger Fabia was startled by the lictor's appearance at her elder sister's door, announcing the return of her husband from the Forum —much to the amusement of the minister's lady; and in her mortification she complained to her father of her loss of position. The father promised her that her own husband should soon enjoy similar public rank; and from that time he and his son-in-law, Licinius, began to agitate for what were afterwards known as the great Licinian Bills. These propositions, when they took shape, were three in number. The first provided that it should be lawful, from that date, to deduct from the capital sum of all standing debts the amount already paid in interest. The second made it illegal for any citizen to occupy, as tenant of the state, more than five hundred *jugers* (about 280 acres) of the public land; which would leave a large portion to be allotted to new claimants, and was practically an agrarian law. The third enacted that in future one of the two consuls must be chosen from the plebeian order. The first would appear an arbitrary and stringent measure, only to be explained by the fact of so many being daily

reduced by hopeless debt into a condition of the most miserable serfdom, and by remembering that in most ancient commonwealths, as with the Jews, usury taken from a fellow-citizen was held discreditable; the second was of course highly unpopular with the privileged class, who looked upon their large and profitable holdings as their own by use and wont; but the last was perhaps the bitterest of all to the patricians, as throwing down the great barrier between class and class. After a struggle which according to Livy lasted ten years, during some of which the city was almost in a state of anarchy,—a struggle maintained with great energy on both sides, yet with considerable patience and forbearance, for though another "secession" on the part of the commons was threatened, no blood was shed in the contest,—the three "Licinian Rogations" passed into law, and a share in the highest magistracy of the state was permanently secured for the commons. A temple was erected to "Concord," to mark the happy termination of the long struggle, and a fourth day was added to the Great Games at Rome. The annalist records it subsequently as a curious fact, that Licinius Stolo was the first notable victim of his own law, being convicted of holding more than the legal quantity of public land.

The border warfare with Volscians and Latins was still going on; and we find inserted in the Annals, though somewhat indistinctly, a second inroad of the Gauls, and a complete defeat of them near Alba by Camillus, now in his old age for the fifth time named

Dictator.* A year afterwards, he died of one of the constantly recurring pestilences. "He had lived five-and-twenty years after his return from exile, justly styled the second founder, after Romulus, of the city of Rome."

Two stories are told by our author of this period, which, whether true or fictitious, are interesting as illustrations of the old Roman spirit. One of the house of the Manlii had been named Dictator for a religious purpose, and had made use of his power to raise a levy of troops to indulge his military vanity. His cruel disposition had shown itself especially in his treatment of his son Titus, a slow-witted youth who had a hesitation in his speech, whom he had banished from his home, and treated as a slave. He was brought to trial for it by one of the tribunes. The son heard of it on the farm where he was working, obtained admittance to the tribune's house, and suddenly presenting himself before the magistrate as he lay in bed, with a large knife in his hand, threatened him with instant death unless he promised to drop the prosecution against his father; which the tribune, seeing him in terrible earnest, did. Livy admits that it was "not a good constitutional precedent, though praiseworthy for its filial duty;" but it was so strongly in accordance with the Roman feeling, that, in spite of his infirmity and utter inexperience, he was elected by

* This story is related by other writers also; but Arnold considers it to be "merely a fabrication of the memorials of the house of the Furii — the last which occurs in the story of Camillus, and not the least scrupulous."—Hist. of Rome, ii. 49.

popular acclamation to a high command in the legions next year.

In that same year is placed the well-known legend, so often a subject for poet and painter, of the devotion of Marcus Curtius. How a great chasm yawned—none knew from what cause—in the middle of the Forum; how the oracles said it could only be closed by casting into it "the best thing that Rome possessed," most readers know; but Livy tells the sequel in his most picturesque manner.

"Then young Marcus Curtius, a gallant soldier, chid them all for doubting that there could be any better thing in Rome than good weapons and a stout heart. He called for silence; and looking towards the temples of the immortal gods that crowned the Forum, and towards the Capitol, he lifted his hands first to heaven, and then stretching them downwards, where the gulf yawned before him, in supplication to the Powers below, he solemnly devoted himself to death. Mounted on his horse, which he had clothed in the most splendid trappings that could be found, he leapt all armed into the chasm, while crowds of men and women showered in after him precious gifts and fruits."—(vii. 6.)

Thirty years after their first appearance, the Gauls made a second inroad into Latium (B.C. 361), and a third some few years later. They are illustrated by two popular stories of personal combat; the first between a gigantic Gaul and young Titus Manlius, who had his surname of "Torquatus" from the golden circlet, the well-known Celtic ornament, which he took from the neck of his antagonist; and the second between Valerius and another gigantic champion, who

like Goliath stalked in front challenging the Roman ranks. Valerius was said to have been assisted by a crow which beat its wings about the face of his enemy, and thenceforth to have borne the name of "Corvus." Both heroes were soon to be better known, and for exploits more important, and probably more authentic if less picturesque. With the help of the Latins, who had renewed the old alliance with Rome, the invading Gauls were beaten, if these Annals are to be trusted, in several great battles—the last under a second Furius Camillus, son of the great Dictator. From this time forth we hear of them no more in Latium.

The Etruscans of Tarquinii were at the same time carrying on with their Roman neighbours a war which is marked by somewhat more than ordinary ferocity. They had defeated a Roman consul, and taken numerous prisoners; and in accordance with that horrible superstition which, as we may see hereafter, found its way into the religion of Rome, they had sacrificed above three hundred Roman soldiers to their national deities. That it was a solemn "act of faith," and not a mere outburst of savage cruelty, is clear from Livy's description of a subsequent battle, in which the Etruscan priests —who were in fact the Lucumones or chiefs of the nation—marched in the front with wild gesticulations, "brandishing live snakes and burning torches in their hands." In that war the first plebeian rose to the dictatorship—Marcus Rutilus; and his victories over the Etruscans of Tarquinii were rewarded by a triumph, in spite of all the jealous efforts of the senate to

resist it. Two years afterwards, a still more signal victory is recorded, and a terrible act of reprisal followed. Three hundred and fifty-eight of the best-born citizens of Tarquinii were saved from the general massacre which ensued on the taking of the town, and were sent prisoners to Rome; there to be "scourged with rods and then beheaded in the Forum"—in retaliation for the deed of the Etruscan priesthood four years before. The people of Cære had found the bond of their common Etruscan blood too strong not to join Tarquinii in levying war against Rome; but when they humbly deprecated punishment, the Romans were magnanimous enough to remember only the shelter they had given, in the terrible days of the Gauls, to the Vestal Virgins and the Sacred Fire. In the midst of all these difficulties, two more new tribes were added to the population of Rome—probably from the conquered or submitted Volscians.

We are now to enter upon a period which the historian is careful to inform us he considers the most momentous in the history of Rome.

"The wars we have to relate from this point onwards are greater, whether as regards the strength of the enemy, the distance of the scene of action, or the length of the war. For in this year hostilities began with the Samnites, a people powerful alike in wealth and in arms. This war with the Samnites, in which the struggle was long doubtful, was followed by the attack of Pyrrhus, and Pyrrhus by the Carthaginians."—(vii. 29.)

These Samnites, with whom Rome now began a struggle which was to last, with little intermission, for

more than fifty years, were of Sabine extraction, occupying that district of the Apennines now known as the Matese, and thence extending their conquests into the plains of Campania. Here they came into collision with the Romans. In the course of one of their inroads they threatened Capua; and the men of that city, after ineffectual attempts to drive them off, sought aid from Rome. With some reluctance, the annalist says—for there was an old convention existing with the Samnites—the aid was given, so far that envoys were sent to request them not to meddle with the friends of Rome. The Samnites treated the message with contempt, and the Roman consuls took the field at once. One of them was Valerius "the Crow," the darling of the soldiers, not only from his recent exploit, but from his genial manners, his hearty good comradeship, and his excellence in all athletic games. Their victory was complete, 30,000 of the enemy being cut to pieces in the first battle, won by the gallantry of one of the consul's lieutenants, Decius Mus, and their camp taken, and 40,000 shields left on the field of battle in a second engagement.* Capua was garrisoned by the Romans; but the luxury and idleness of a winter spent in that city, we are told, corrupted the soldiers. A serious mutiny was the consequence, which threatened the safety of Rome, until Valerius

* "We have no real history of the Samnite war in this first campaign, but accounts of the worthy deeds of two famous Romans, M. Valerius Corvus and P. Decius Mus. They are the heroes of the two stories, and there is evidently no other bject in either of them but to set off their glory."—Arnold.

(appointed Dictator in the emergency) quieted it by his wise mediation; a general amnesty was granted, and the troops returned to their duty.

But the demands which the soldiers are said to have made, that no man who had served during one campaign in a higher rank should in the next be called upon to accept a lower—that no man's name should be struck off the roll without his own consent—and that the disproportionate pay of the cavalry should be reduced—point to other elements of discontent than the dissipations of Capua. The movement amongst the troops was probably connected with a new agitation amongst the commons in their civil capacity; for coincident in time we find two measures proposed and apparently carried by one of the tribunes, which Livy dismisses in a very few lines, but which must have been of great political significance: first, that it should be absolutely illegal to lend money at interest; secondly, that no man should be re-elected to the same magistracy within ten years (a check upon the monopoly of public office by the great houses); and lastly, that as one consul now *must* be, so in future both consuls *might* be, plebeians.

The next year saw a change in the relations of Rome and her neighbours which is not very easy to comprehend. The Samnites had made a truce with Rome; but the war in Campania still went on, and the towns which were hard pressed by the Samnites turned to the Latin league for the protection which was refused them from Rome. The Roman annalist assures us that the Latins eagerly seized on the opportunity to engage

the Campanians in a conspiracy against the supremacy of Rome; but it is more than possible that they were indignant at the separate peace which Rome, for her own ends, had made with the common enemy. Be this as it may, the Latins were summoned to send envoys to Rome to explain their intentions. When they arrived, they made a proposal as to the terms of alliance for the future which was probably not so unreasonable in itself as it would appear to a Roman. It was, that on condition of Rome being still acknowledged as head of the confederacy, one of her two consuls, and half of the senate, should henceforth be chosen from the Latins.

Then Titus Manlius "of the Torque," newly elected consul, rose in his place, and loudly declared that should the Roman senate be cowardly enough to submit to such dictation from "provincials," he would slay with his own hand the first Latin who dared to take his seat there. Amidst general indignation, he vehemently invoked the gods of Rome against such a profanation. The Latin envoy, quitting the senate-house in haste, fell headlong down the steps and was taken up senseless. Manlius pronounced it a judgment from the insulted deities, and a happy omen for the Roman cause. War was declared at once against the Latins; both consuls set out for Capua, and by a curious shifting of relations, the Samnites now found themselves, in virtue of the late truce, the allies of Rome.

The foe with whom Rome was now engaged was more

formidable than the Samnites. The struggle against the Latins, says the annalist, had many of the features of a civil war. Romans and Latins spoke the same language, worshipped the same gods, had married into each other's families, and fought side by side against the same enemies. "There was nothing," says Livy, "in which the Latins differed from the Romans, except in courage,"—but here we must remember it is a Roman who speaks. The struggle was sharp and bloody; but, perhaps for the same reasons, it was comparatively short.

Possibly it was the feeling that they were now in face of an enemy to whom Roman tactics and modes of warfare were thoroughly familiar, which led to the stern instance of military discipline recorded of the consul Manlius. He had given strict orders that there was to be no independent personal fighting in front of the lines. His own son was in command of a troop of light cavalry, employed to reconnoitre. He was challenged by a captain of Tusculan horse, and, provoked by his taunts, fought and killed him. It was in vain that he pleaded his father's own precedent in the case of the Gaul; the consul—as stern a parent as he had been a dutiful son—would see nothing in the case but a wilful breach of discipline—a double act of disobedience to his chief and to his father. The only compliment he paid his son was to say he knew that, like a true Manlius, he would bear his doom bravely. He was beheaded in the presence of the army, amid the lamentations of his comrades, and

their bitter execrations on the father; but the consul's orders were obeyed thenceforth.*

When the engagement took place—somewhere in the neighbourhood of Mount Vesuvius—an act of heroism of another character, yet still thoroughly Roman, gave to the name of its hero a lasting place in Roman memory. The second Roman consul was Decius Mus, one of the heroes of the late Samnite war. Both consuls had seen a vision in the night, warning them that the gods required as the victims "an army on the one side, and a general on the other." They at once made a joint resolve that if either of the Roman wings gave way, the commander of that wing should devote himself to death. When the usual sacrifices were offered before the battle, it was announced that the omens were fatal for Decius. He simply answered that "it was well, if those of his colleague were favourable." In the battle, his wing began to give ground. He at once summoned the Pontifex—the official who must give directions.

"The Pontifex bade him put on his official civic robe, veil his head, and place his hand beneath his toga upon his chin; then, standing on a spear placed under his feet, to say these words: 'O Janus, Jupiter, our Father Mars, Quirinus, Bellona, ye Lares, ye Nine-Fold deities,† gods of our nation, gods in whose hands are we and our enemies,

* This severity of discipline was a national tradition with the Romans. A Posthumius is said to have done the same thing previously in a war with the Volscians. Livy does not credit the story; but an allusion in Aulus Gellius shows that it was currently believed. See Book iv. ch. 29. Aul. Gell. i. 13.

† These are uncertain.

I pray you, I adore you, I ask and win your pardon,—that to the Roman people of the Quirites ye may vouchsafe strength and victory, and strike the enemies of the Roman people of the Quirites with terror, panic, and death. And as I pronounce these words, so for the republic of the Quirites, for the army, legions, and allies of the Roman people, I devote the legions and allies of the enemy, together with mine own body, to the Manes and the Earth.' When he had thus prayed, he bade his lictors go to Manlius, and straightway tell him he had devoted himself for the army. Girding his robe round him, he leapt on his horse, fully armed, and charged into the centre of the enemy. Both hosts saw in him a more than mortal presence, as though he were sent from heaven as a vessel charged with the whole wrath of the gods, to turn destruction from his own host and hurl it on the enemy. So the panic and terror he bore with him first shook the enemy's front, then spread through all their ranks. Certain it is, that wherever he rode, there men trembled as though struck by pestilence."—(viii. 9.)

A stratagem of the other consul's—bringing up his veterans only at the last—completed the victory which this panic had begun. "We find in some writers," says Livy, "that the Samnites, who had waited to see what turn the fighting would take, came up to help the Romans after the day was won." * Scarcely a fourth part of the enemy's force, we are told, escaped the slaughter; their camp was taken, and the Latin power utterly broken. They succeeded in raising a fresh

* "There was no Samnite historian to tell, and no Roman annalist would tell truly. Nor need we wonder at this; for if we had only certain English accounts of the battle of Waterloo, who would know that the Prussians had any effectual share in that day's victory?"—Arnold.

army, only to be beaten again by the same consul. Many of their towns surrendered at once; and after a few ineffectual struggles, the conquest was complete. Within three years of its beginning, the greatest war in which Rome had yet been engaged was finished: the great Latin confederacy was broken up for ever; terms granted to each separate city were such as to isolate them as far as possible, and prevent any such union for the future; and the Romans and Latins became practically one commonwealth.

Manlius was honoured, at the expiration of his consulship, with a well-earned triumph. But it had its drawbacks. "Only the older men went forth to meet him; the younger, both then and all his life after, abhorred and execrated him." Such is the historian's brief but emphatic remark. They remembered only the unrelenting sentence which had taken the life of his son.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROMANS BECOME MASTERS OF ITALY.

(BOOKS VIII.–X. B.C. 327–290.)

ROME and Samnium were both too warlike, and perhaps both too ambitious, long to remain peaceful neighbours. When the war with the Latins was over, and neither required each other's support against a common enemy, they watched each other's movements with jealous eyes. The Samnites took Fregellæ from the Volscians, and destroyed it; the Romans afterwards sent a colony to occupy it, as its position was important in maintaining their line of communication with Samnium; though this was, in fact, taking possession of a Samnite conquest. The Samnites, on the other hand, were accused of exciting to disaffection, secretly or openly, some of the smaller states within the Roman dominion. War was inevitable, and both were prepared for it.

The first action of any importance resulted in a victory gained by the Romans under somewhat remarkable circumstances. Papirius Cursor had been named Dictator for the war, and had strictly charged his Master of the Horse—a Fabius—not to engage the

enemy in his absence. But Fabius found the temptation of command too strong, and fought and defeated the Samnites—Livy assures us, with immense loss. The Dictator, on his return, sentenced him to death for breach of orders. The troops broke out into almost open mutiny; the Dictator was obstinate; and the terrible precedent set by Manlius seemed likely to be repeated with highly dangerous results. Fabius escaped to Rome: there his aged father appealed on his behalf to the tribunes, but even they were loath to question a Dictator's sentence; and it was not until the senate and people united to ask the life of the culprit as a boon to themselves, that Papirius at last gave way. Fabius was chosen one of the consuls next year; and after a truce which the Roman annalist accuses the Samnites of having broken, he defeated them in a decisive battle, and reduced them to offer terms which are represented as humiliating in the extreme. They even proposed to give up to the Romans one of their chiefs, whom they declared to have been the instigator of what they now confessed to have been "a treacherous breach of faith." He saved himself from Roman vengeance by suicide.

But in the next year arose the man who has been called the Samnite Hannibal — Pontius of Telesia. Under his able leadership took place what Livy calls "the Convention of Caudium, so memorable for the blow that fell on Rome." The annalist, never happy in his military geography, is content here to make no attempt to explain the movements of the campaign. We learn little more than that the Romans were led

by false information into a difficult defile of the Apennines, known as the "Caudine Forks," where the enemy had already posted themselves in force, and from which neither advance nor retreat was possible.* After one or two desperate attempts to break through, seeing starvation imminent, they surrendered at discretion. The Samnites could not resolve how best to use their victory. They sent to consult Herennius, father of their general, who passed for the wisest man amongst his people. The old man's first advice was to let their prisoners all go unharmed; and when this was rejected as preposterous, he then recommended that they should all be put to death. He defended this truly Machiavellian alternative by the argument that an enemy so powerful could only be safely dealt with either by the most magnanimous kindness, or by a blow which would cripple them for many generations. Neither counsel was adopted. Their lives were offered them on condition of giving up their arms, passing under the yoke, and quitting the country; hostages were also to be given for the withdrawal of the Roman military colonies, and for their keeping the peace for the future. The troops are said to have exclaimed loudly against such humiliating terms, and against the consuls for submitting to them. Lentulus, one of the lieutenant-generals, reminded them, in language which has a certain nobility of its own, that their lives were needful to Rome, and that

* The place cannot be identified with certainty. Niebuhr and Arnold are of opinion that it was the valley between Arienzo and Archaia, on the road from Naples to Benevento.

even ignominy must be submitted to in the cause of one's country.

"While the troops were thus chafing at their destiny the fatal hour of their disgrace drew on, which was to make their experience even more bitter than all their anticipations. First they were ordered to come outside their lines without arms and stripped to a single garment; and the hostages were first given up, and led off in custody. Then the lictors were ordered to quit the consuls, whose military cloaks were stripped off; which bred such commiseration among the very men who had just been execrating them, and saying they ought to be given up to their fury and torn to pieces, that now the soldiers forgot their own misery, and turned away their eyes from this outrage to their commanders as from a spectacle too painful to look upon. The consuls first, stripped almost naked, were forced under the yoke; then each officer in succession, according to his rank, was subjected to the like ignominy; then the legions, one after the other. The enemy stood round under arms, reviling and mocking them. Swords were even brandished in their faces; some were wounded, nay, even killed, if their countenance expressed too fierce a sense of the indignity, and so offended their conquerors." —(ix. 6, 7.)

They made their way to Capua, where they were received with kindness and commiseration. Thence they returned in disorganised parties to Rome, "slinking into the city late in the evening like delinquents," and hiding themselves at home for many days from the eyes of their indignant fellow-citizens. The consuls silently abdicated their functions, and a Dictator was again named.

The terms of the convention were shamefully broken

by the Romans; the annalist himself utterly fails to make out a case of anything better than the grossest and most unworthy quibbling. The treaty—made, as Livy admits, by Roman consuls and tribunes—was held not to have been made with the consent of the Roman people. Even if the consul Posthumius did, as we are told, go back and place himself and his brother officers in the hands of the Samnites, as guilty of having made terms which could not be kept, such individual self-devotion could not heal the public breach of faith. The only course which might have had any show of fair dealing was, as two of the tribunes suggested, to restore in all points the *status quo* at the Caudine Forks before the surrender; but this suggestion did not gain a moment's hearing.

The Samnite general acted with a noble scorn. He refused to accept the victims whom Rome offered him instead of justice; and when the consul Posthumius, with a mean ingenuity, declaring himself to have changed his nationality by this extradition of himself, struck the Roman herald, and declared that such an act of violence, thus committed by "a Samnite," would justify the Romans in at once beginning war, Pontius merely expressed his contempt of such a subterfuge as "a mockery of conscience unworthy of children, still more of elders and consulars of a great state," and appealed to the gods of battle against the treachery of Rome.

But the gods were not propitious. Though the Samnites renewed the struggle, and maintained it for three-and-twenty years, and though the Hernicans

took the opportunity to revolt, and almost all Etruria rose in arms against the Romans, the result, in spite of occasional reverses, was still in favour of Rome. Livy himself admits that the annals of this period are hopelessly confused, and it would be out of place here to examine them. One story, which bears the stamp of invention on the face of it, asserts that in the very first year of the renewed war, the Samnite general, Pontius Telesinus, and his own whole army, had in their turn to pass under the yoke, and that all the arms and standards lost by the Romans at the Caudine Forks were in the same battle recovered. This victory is ascribed to Papirius Cursor, as then consul: a hero who, celebrated alike for his fleetness of foot (whence his surname of Cursor), his bodily strength, and his great capacity for eating and drinking, reminds us of some of the knights of the Round Table. Livy considers that Alexander the Great, if after conquering Asia he had turned his arms on Europe, might have met with his match in the great Roman Dictator. To Papirius is at least due the honour of turning the tide decisively in this second Samnite war by a great victory in the Samnite territory, though the scene of it is uncertain. The triumph which was accorded to him was long remembered for its magnificence; the splendid armour, inlaid with gold and silver, the gilded shields and brilliant costumes stripped from the Samnite warriors, especially from their "Sacred Band," made a display never before seen at Rome. The shields were long after used on public occasions to decorate the Forum. The war lingered on for some four years more, until it

was closed by another great defeat of the enemy at Bovianum, where their general, Statius Gellius, and a large body of troops, were made prisoners, and the Samnites were reduced to sue for peace.

During the years occupied by this second Samnite war, the annalist has noted some points of internal history which deserve attention. One especially he terms, not without reason, "a second starting-point of liberty." It was the abolition of the power of imprisonment for debt. He refers the passing of this law to the popular indignation excited by the outrageous cruelty practised on an unhappy debtor by one of the Papirii, a house whose members appear to have been men of violent passions: but it was probably a result which had been only waiting for its accomplishment. A member of another illustrious house—Appius Claudius "the Blind," great-grandson of the Decemvir—had made himself famous during the same period in more ways than one. He will best be remembered by the great public works carried out during his tenure of the censorship and subsequent consulate: the earliest of those gigantic aqueducts which, even in their ruins, strike us to this day with admiration; and more famous still, the great road connecting Rome with Capua, known as the Appian Way. Nothing so great had been attempted since those Etruscan works which are ascribed to the Tarquins. Diodorus tells us that they exhausted the whole revenue of Rome: Niebuhr considers that some of the state domain must have been alienated to provide for their cost. But they were not the result of

the forced labour of the Roman commons, which made the buildings under the "Tyrants" such a hateful memory: they probably furnished employment for the large bodies of Samnite or other prisoners, and so may have been completed at comparatively little cost to the state. Appius, when in power, showed the lofty and arrogant spirit of his family. He held his office of censor—in direct defiance, it would appear, of the law to the contrary—for the full period of five years, which was the nominal duration of the appointment, and gave offence not only to the old patrician houses, but even to the moderate party, by placing on the roll of senators men who had no title to the honour except their wealth. His object may fairly be suspected to have been to attach such men to his own private interests by this obligation. He was the author of some other popular measures which may have had the same bearing; amongst them, the causing to be published a kind of calendar containing the rubrics, as they might be called, of the pontifical law, which made days lawful or unlawful for the transaction of business—a technical knowledge for which, hitherto, people had to depend upon the "colleges" of pontifices and augurs, whose members were always of the patrician order. A few years afterwards followed an Act (the Ogulnian Law) which opened these colleges to the plebeians, and removed another of the few remaining disabilities, now chiefly religious, of that order. The Valerian Law—permitting appeal from any magistrate to the people—which seems to have been virtually in abeyance, was in the same year formally re-enacted.

The Æquians, who had given the Romans no trouble since the days of the Gaulish invasion, had joined the Samnites in the last war, and the first step now taken was their chastisement. Standing alone, as they did, since the submission of the Samnites, they were no match for the Romans. In fifty days, says the annalist, the consuls took forty-one of their towns, and "all but blotted out their very name from under heaven." They were yet strong enough, however, to make show of revolt from time to time. What he calls a "trifling expedition" was also undertaken against some Umbrian banditti (so they are termed) who had been troublesome; and by one of those merciless proceedings not uncommon with the Romans, two thousand of them were deliberately smoked to death in a cave.

Some little difficulties occurred with the Marsians and Etruscans; and the hostilities with these latter people led to a third and last Samnite war. The hopes of Samnium were raised by a new inroad of the Gauls into Etruria. The Etruscans—following in this the Roman precedent—are said to have paid them a large sum as black-mail to induce them to withdraw, and further, to purchase their aid against Rome.* It seems certain, at all events, that the Gauls threatened Rome, and that the Samnites took advantage of the opportunity to make every effort to form a grand coalition against her. They were already extending their own conquests in Lucania, from which district

* The version which Livy gives of this transaction is contradicted by Polybius.

envoys were sent to entreat aid from Rome. The Samnites haughtily refused to listen to any remonstrance, or to withdraw their troops, and war was at once declared by the Romans.

The account given of the ensuing campaign, in which the first Scipio that we meet in history commanded as consul, is far from clear or satisfactory: but it seems plain that, in spite of victories claimed and recorded, the Romans were in some straits, since they called on Quintus Fabius in his old age, and in spite of his reluctance, to accept the consulship. But Etruria began to waver and talk of peace; and both consuls marched victoriously through Samnium, laying all waste with fire and sword where they went. But the Gauls appear again in Etruria—hired by Etruscan gold, as Livy tells us—and the Samnite general (another of the family of Gellius) took the bold step, which Livy's want of military knowledge prevents him from appreciating, of leaving his own country in the desperate state it was, and making a countermarch into Etruria, to fix its wavering allegiance by the presence of himself and a Samnite army. Whilst the consuls, with all the available force of Rome, marched into Etruria to meet him, another Samnite army threw itself into Campania, and laid waste the actual territory of the city of Rome. The alarm within the city itself was greater than it had been since the approach of the Gauls; and the danger of the situation was increased by personal disputes between the consuls. However, the Samnites were checked; and if we cannot trust the accounts which these Annals

give us of two great victories, at least the success was sufficient to place Rome in safety.* The confederate forces, bound together by no common interest except enmity to Rome, did not long continue to act in concert; the Etruscans and Umbrians preferred to defend their own country, and the Samnites and Gauls had to give up their march upon the city, and draw back upon the Apennines, followed by both Roman consuls and their armies.

They were brought to battle at Sentinum. Fabius commanded on the right against the Samnites; his colleague Decius on the left fronted the Gauls. He found these dreaded antagonists as hard to deal with as their ancestors. Twice, when his infantry seemed to make no impression, he charged in person at the head of his cavalry, and with success. But as they rode forward they came upon a new and bewildering enemy — the war-chariots of the Gauls; at sight of which, and the rattle of their wheels, the Roman horses took fright, and the panic spreading to the riders, they wheeled and took to flight, communicating their own terror and confusion to the ranks of the legionaries. The battle on the left seemed hopelessly lost; when Decius, after trying in vain to rally his men by desperate personal exertions, bethought himself of the heroism of his father. "It is the privilege of our house," he said with a stern pride,

* Livy says that in the second of these victories, besides killing 6000 of the enemy, and taking 2500 prisoners, the Romans "*recovered* 7400" who had been made prisoners. This is proving somewhat too much.

"to sacrifice ourselves as the ransom of our country." Like his father, he called upon the Pontifex to recite the formula of self-devotion, and added words of terrible imprecation of his own.

"I send before me where I go Panic and Rout, Blood and Slaughter, the curse of the gods above and of the gods below; I involve with myself in destruction the standards, the weapons, the armour of the enemy; be the fate of the Gauls and the Samnites even the same as mine!"

So, like his father, wrapping his cloak round him, he charged where the enemy were thickest, and fell covered with wounds. But not even all the faith of the Roman legionaries in this heroic act of self-sacrifice as "the price of victory" could break the steady masses of the Gauls; and had not Fabius been in a position by this time to reinforce his left wing, the Romans would have been beaten. But he had broken the Samnites after an obstinate fight; and while he drove them to their camp, he now detached a force of cavalry and infantry to take the Gauls in rear. The victory was soon complete: the Samnite general fell defending his camp, and his troops, retaining their ranks and formation, retreated sullenly from the hard-fought field. The annalist gives the loss of the enemy at 25,000 killed, and 8000 prisoners; possibly not much exaggerated, since he admits a loss on the Roman side, in killed alone, of 8200—7000 of them in the wing commanded by Decius.

It was a great victory, won at a heavy cost; and though the Samnites maintained a gallant struggle for nearly two years more, their efforts must have seemed

even to themselves almost desperate. The solemn ceremonies with which they prepared for their last campaign seem to show that they were consciously playing their last stake. A levy *en masse* was raised throughout Samnium of all who were able to bear arms, who had to serve on pain of death; and an ancient and mysterious ceremony was revived by an aged priest—"out of an ancient linen roll,"—by which each individual soldier was brought up to the altar—"more like a victim than a worshipper"—and compelled to swear fidelity to his leaders to the death, and vengeance on any comrade who should desert his ranks. Some who refused the oath were slain, we are assured, on the spot, and the swearing-in of the rest went on over their dead bodies. A picked body of 16,000, splendidly armed and equipped, was thus formed by co-optation—each man, after the first ten, choosing for himself a comrade till the number was complete, who from their white dress were known as the "Linen Legion."

But the historian thinks that these stern vows of obligation rather awed the soldiers into obedience than gave them spirit to fight. They fought, he says, chiefly because they dared not fly, and "feared their comrades more than their enemy." He has another victory of the Romans to record, before he closes this last book of his First Decade. He closes it before the "Samnite Hannibal" reappears once more upon the field (we cannot but wonder why he has been absent so long); before Pontius of Telesina, the hero of the Caudine Pass, turns the tide of battle for a season,

and defeats a Roman consul; and before he is himself in turn defeated by the Fabii, father and son, with the loss of 20,000 men, and taken prisoner to Rome, and so the great Samnite wars were ended. And we are spared from reading in his pages how, to the eternal disgrace of Rome, after having been led in chains to grace the triumph of the conquerors, the gallant Samnite general was beheaded that same day in the dungeons of the Capitol.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LOST DECADE.

(B.C. 294–219.)

THE Second Decade of these Annals, from the eleventh to the twentieth book, is lost, and leaves a gap of seventy-five years. In that interval Rome had crushed the last opponents of her rule in Italy, had tried her strength against foreign enemies, and begun to entertain the lust of foreign conquest. The city of Tarentum had sought to escape the fate of its neighbours by calling in the aid of Pyrrhus, king of Epirus; and Pyrrhus, who had an ambition to become a second Alexander, gladly embraced the opportunity of gaining a footing in Italy. So, for the first time, Rome and Greece met each other in arms. The ability of Pyrrhus as a general, the tactics of the Macedonian phalanx, with which the Romans were as yet unacquainted, and the terror and confusion created by his elephants, won him two great battles, and Rome had never been in more imminent danger. But Pyrrhus was compelled to quit Italy by the complete victory won by the Romans at Beneventum, B.C. 275; and the Tarentines had to pay the penalty of having called him in. Other small

states made their final submission, and in B.C. 266 the Romans became the acknowledged masters of Italy.

Rome then entered upon a new and extended career. She was tempted to interfere in Sicily, where the Carthaginians were becoming a formidable power, in too close neighbourhood not to be regarded with some jealousy. Carthage was the most flourishing of the many Phœnician colonies, and had become the capital of Libya. Her merchant seamen, with the enterprise of their race, had spread themselves along the coasts of the Mediterranean, voyaging as far as Cornwall, if not to the Baltic, in one direction, to Sierra Leone in the other, and planting settlements wherever openings showed themselves for extending her commerce. She had flourishing factories and silver-mines in Spain,—was in possession of nearly all what is now Andalusia and Granada,—had gained possession of the whole of Sardinia and Corsica and the Balearic Isles, was spreading her colonies along the coasts of Sicily, and contemplating the occupation of the whole island. A horde of piratical adventurers called Mamertines (children of Mamers, or Mars), settled in Messana, were threatened with expulsion by Hiero, who from having been a soldier of fortune under Pyrrhus had risen to be king of Syracuse. They appealed for aid to Rome: the choice for them, they said, lay between Rome and Carthage; they represented how dangerous it would be for the Romans to have a Carthaginian fleet stationed within sight of Italy. The Romans did not require much persuasion; and meanwhile Carthage had already intervened, had arranged a peace between

the Mamertines and Hiero, and occupied the harbour of Messana. A collision was inevitable: and although Hiero at first joined the Carthaginians, the early successes of the Romans soon led him to change his policy, and he became and continued the steadfast ally of Rome.

The two nations who now for the first time met in arms presented some strong national contrasts. The Romans, soldiers from habit, as yet knew little of the sea. The Carthaginians, on the other hand, were born and bred sailors, but military service on land suited neither their habits nor their tastes. They preferred engaging for this service mercenaries from Spain and from Africa. It was not till after six years of hard training that their great general Hamilcar Barcas could bring into the field any infantry that could hold their ground against a Roman legion. On the other hand, the Romans had to take a Carthaginian war-galley as their model before they had any ships afloat that could meet those of their enemies with any hope of success. It is said that within two months they built and launched a hundred ships on the new pattern. Thus they became at length a match for the Carthaginians by sea, carried the war even into Africa, and after a struggle of twenty-three years, by the great naval victory off the Ægates Islands, had made themselves masters of all Sicily. This is known as the First Punic War.* An insurrection in Sardinia, breaking out while Carthage was occupied in suppressing a mutiny of

* The Romans called the Phœnicians *Pœni*; hence the adjective "Punic."

her mercenary troops at home, gave the Romans an opportunity of taking that island under their "protection;" and Corsica soon followed—"one of the most detestable acts of injustice," remarks Niebuhr, "in the history of Rome." It was not probable that Carthage should tamely submit to be deprived under such circumstances of her most valuable provinces. She had been too weak to resist at the time: but she only waited the hour and the man, and when they came, began the Second Punic War.

Our annalist is now treading on safer ground, and has the opportunity of following more trustworthy authorities. In this war was taken prisoner Cincius Alimentus, a Roman senator, who afterwards wrote a history of Rome (in Greek), and whom Livy more than once quotes with approbation. Cincius even made some personal acquaintance with the great Carthaginian into whose power he had fallen. Fabius Pictor, too, now becomes a contemporary authority; for he also served in these campaigns. But Livy has chiefly, though not always, followed the later history of Polybius, who was born about thirty years after the conclusion of the war, and therefore might have had access to the best sources of information. Polybius is generally fair and impartial; and Livy, who had the whole of his history to guide him, though five books of it only have reached us, is more indebted to him than he seems willing to allow,—speaking of him somewhat grudgingly as "an authority by no means to be despised."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SECOND PUNIC WAR: THRASYMENUS AND CANNÆ.

(BOOKS XXI.–XXII. B.C. 218–216.)

"THE war maintained against the Roman people by the Carthaginians under Hannibal, of which I am about to write, is the most memorable," says the historian, "of all that were ever waged." Modern authorities have confirmed his judgment, so far at least as all ancient history is concerned. "It was no mere struggle," says Michelet, "to determine the lot of two cities or two empires; but it was a strife on which depended the fate of two races of mankind, whether the dominion of the world should belong to the Indo-Germanic or the Semitic family of nations." "Never," says Livy, "were two combatant states more powerful in all resources; both were in their full strength; they knew each other's tactics from former experience; and they were so evenly matched, that the side which was finally victorious was at one time in the more imminent peril." And he adds that, strong as the opposing forces were, their mutual hatred was even stronger.

The future hero of the war had indeed been sworn from his boyhood to be the enemy of Rome. His

father, Hamilcar Barcas, had brought up his three sons, Hannibal, Hasdrubal, and Mago, to be, as he said, "three lion's whelps," to glut themselves on the blood of Rome. After he had been killed in Spain, the young Hannibal had continued to serve there under his brother-in-law Hasdrubal, who had succeeded to the command. Hasdrubal was assassinated; the voice of the army, and of the Carthaginian commons, was loud in favour of Hannibal as his successor; and the graver leaders of the opposite party in vain protested against handing on the command to another of the powerful clan of Barcas, who seemed to threaten Carthage with a military despotism. The character of the young commander, and his first reception by the troops in Spain, is one of the most characteristic passages in Livy's work.

"The veterans thought it was Hamilcar restored to them in living person: they saw the same decision in his face, the same fire in his eyes, the very same features and expression. But he so behaved himself, that in a short time the memory of his father became one of his least claims to the popular favour. Never was a nature more fitted for two most different duties—to command and to obey. So that it would not be easy to decide whether he was a greater favourite with the general or with the troops. There was no officer whom Hasdrubal preferred to put in command when anything bold and energetic had to be done, and none in whom the men had more confidence, or under whom they would dare more. He had the greatest boldness in encountering danger, and the coolest judgment in the midst of it. No toil could either fatigue him bodily, or depress his spirits. Heat and cold he could bear alike: his rule as to food and drink was set by natural appetite, not

pleasure. His times of waking and sleeping did not depend on its being day or night; such hours as remained after his work was finished he gave to repose: and even that was not courted on a luxurious couch, or by enjoining silence. Many have seen him, wrapped in his military cloak, stretched on the ground amongst the pickets and sentinels. In his dress there was no difference between him and other young men: his horse and his arms only were noticeable. He was by far the best soldier in the army, whether on foot or horseback; the first to go into action and the last to retire. These admirable qualities were matched by as remarkable faults: an inhuman cruelty, a more than Punic perfidy; no truth, no reverence, no fear of the gods, no respect for an oath, no scruple of religion."—(xxi. 4.)

Such was the young general (he was just twenty-six years old), the great son of a great father, who was now to be matched against consuls and dictators of Rome, and after baffling and defeating them for a period of seventeen years, was himself finally overcome by circumstances rather than by superiority in arms. The quarrel between Rome and Carthage began in the debatable territory in Spain. The ostensible cause was the siege of Saguntum (now Murviedro) by Hannibal, the question being whether that town did or did not lie within the line of demarcation agreed upon by treaty between the Romans and Carthaginians in Spain. Ambassadors were sent from Rome to warn Hannibal to hold his hand from "allies of Rome;" and upon his refusing them an audience, they at once proceeded, in accordance with their instructions, to Carthage. Still they got no satisfactory answer; and Hannibal meanwhile pressed on the siege of Sagun-

tum vigorously. In spite of a gallant resistance of eight months, during which he was himself severely wounded, it was taken by storm, and every man in it put to the sword. The leading citizens had preferred a voluntary death: they had heaped all their valuables in the market-place, made a funeral pile of them, and thrown themselves upon it.

The indignation of the Romans was extreme, not unmixed with remorse for having delayed their own interference too long. They sent a second embassy to Carthage, demanding peremptorily that the act of Hannibal should either be avowed or disavowed. The discussion in the Carthaginian senate was short and fierce. Their chief speaker concluded by saying:—

"'Leave off talking about Saguntum and the Ebro; and as we know what you have long been nursing in your hearts, let us have it out at last.' Then the Roman gathered his robe into a fold in front of him, and said, 'Here we carry for you peace or war; choose which you will.' At these words they shouted with equal fierceness in reply, 'Give us which you please!' And when the other shook out the fold, and said he gave them 'war,' all answered that they accepted it, and that in the same spirit with which they accepted it they would carry it out."

The Roman envoys crossed into Spain at once, to strengthen their own interests there, and to detach any tribes whom they could from the Carthaginian alliance. In Spain they met with little encouragement; one tribe bade them seek for new allies in some quarter where their base desertion of the Saguntines in their need was not known. They then passed on into Gaul.

The object was to prevent, if possible, the advance which they already anticipated of Hannibal through Gaul into Italy. But the Gauls told them plainly that they saw no reason why they should thus force the Carthaginian to turn his arms against themselves in order to save the Romans.

Hannibal made his preparations carefully for the great expedition which he contemplated. He threw strong garrisons into Sicily, and appointed his brother Hasdrubal to command in Spain during his absence. He began his march towards the Pyrenees with 90,000 foot and 12,000 horse, African and Spanish, and 37 elephants. Before he crossed the Ebro, he had a dream or vision.

"He saw in his sleep a warrior of godlike aspect, who said he had been sent from Jove to be the guide of Hannibal into Italy; only let him follow, and never turn his eyes away from him. At first, he thought, he followed the figure in awe, without glancing round him or behind him; then, wondering in himself, with the curiosity of human nature, what it could be that he was thus forbidden to look back at, he could no longer refrain his eyes; when he saw behind him a serpent of enormous size rolling along and sweeping down trees and underwood, and followed by a storm and the crashing of thunder. Then, when he asked what the monster was or what it portended, he heard a voice say that it was 'the desolation of Italy—only let him still press forwards, and ask no questions, but suffer the future to remain hidden from his view.'"—(xxi. 22.)

He had taken measures, by envoys and presents, to secure a passage for his troops through the country of the Gauls, and had made inquiries as to the most prac-

ticable passes of the Alps. He reduced such tribes as lay on that side the Pyrenees and still adhered to the Roman alliance; and leaving Hanno with a strong force to occupy the district, made his way over the Pyrenees, and effected the passage of the Rhone in spite of some opposition from the Gauls on the opposite bank. Fertile in resources, he collected boats from all quarters, and even set his men to manufacture rough punts for the purpose; while the elephants are said to have been got across on rafts, upon which they were tempted to trust themselves by very much the same stratagem as is used in India to this day,—by covering the rafts with earth, and driving the females in front. The Romans had two armies in the field, each under a consul; Publius Scipio was to command in Spain, while his colleague Sempronius was sent into Sicily, with orders to make a descent on Africa if he saw opportunity. Scipio reached Marseilles too late to oppose Hannibal's passage of the Rhone, and he had but vague information as to his movements. While the heavier portion of the Carthaginian army was crossing the river, an indecisive skirmish took place between some of their Numidian irregular horse and a troop of Roman cavalry. Hannibal was hesitating whether to engage the consul's army, which he learnt was not far off, or continue his march for Italy, when the arrival of some chiefs of the Boii, a tribe of Cisalpine Gauls, who offered to be his guides and escort over the Alps, decided him not to waste his forces in a battle on that side, but to make by rapid marches for the foot of the mountains. He harangued his troops—if not in the

words which the Roman annalist gives us, yet, we may well conceive, in the like strain. The Alps, he told them, were the portals of Rome. Rome had been taken once already by the Gauls—those very Gauls whom they had so easily beaten; would they allow them to be better men than themselves?

He was misled, early in the march, by the treachery of guides volunteered to him by one of the mountain-tribes, and for some time his army was in imminent danger. They were surrounded on all sides in a narrow defile, attacked in front and rear, and masses of rock were hurled down upon them by the hostile natives; but Hannibal was able to maintain the steadiness of his infantry, and they forced their way through. Nine days after they left the plains, Hannibal looked down from the central ridge of the Alps on the plains of Italy. But his troops were fatigued, half frozen, and disheartened; a heavy fall of snow during their two days' rest increased their misery; and they found the descent still more difficult. In one place, a large portion of the mountain-road had been broken away (probably by an avalanche), and they had to stop and repair it; and here we have the well-known story of the cutting through the rocks, after heating them with large fires and then pouring on vinegar. The beasts, and especially the elephants, were half starved before they reached the nearest pasture-ground. When he mustered his troops, he found that he had scarcely left him half the number with which he had crossed the Ebro.

The story of this passage of the Alps, as the annalist tells it, is picturesque in the highest degree; but

the geography is of the vaguest, and it is impossible not to suspect that many of the details of the march are little better than a clever fancy picture. The writer confesses that he does not know for certain by which pass they crossed—whether it was by what he calls the "Pennine" pass, or the pass of "Cremo." Wherever these were, it is most probable that the passage was made by way of the Little St Bernard, though some arguments have been advanced in favour of Mont Cenis.

Scipio, meanwhile, having failed to check the advance of Hannibal through Gaul, had re-embarked his troops for Italy, and prepared to meet his enemy on his descent into the plains of Piedmont. Putting himself at the head of the army which he found there under the command of the prætors, he crossed the Po at Placentia, and threw himself in Hannibal's way, who was quite as anxious to meet him. Both generals, says the annalist, had the highest opinion of each other's ability. He gives us at some length the speeches which he supposes each might have addressed to their troops—taking this mode, as he so often does, of putting his readers in possession of the feelings with which each of the contending parties began the campaign. The Roman pointed out to his men that the enemy they were going to fight they had already beaten: Carthage had surely not bred a new race of men since the last war; moreover, this particular army was already travel-worn and half famished by their journey over the Alps. They must remember, too, that they were fighting for Rome; there was no second mountain-

barrier like the Alps to protect the city—its sole defence and safety lay in their hands.

The Carthaginian used a characteristic means of rousing the courage of his men. He offered the chance of liberty and life to any of their lately-made Gaulish prisoners who would act the part of gladiators, and engage in personal combat in sight of his army; trusting that the fierce excitement of the spectacle would make them eager to fight for themselves. Then he made his harangue—reminding them of the perfidy and restless ambition of Rome, which left them no choice but war in self-defence; and drawing a confident comparison between his own tried experience in war, and the mutual good understanding between himself and his troops, as opposed to this "six-months' general" whom Rome had sent out, and the raw levies to whom he was almost a stranger.

Their first encounter was a cavalry action on the banks of the river Ticino, in which the Romans were worsted. The consul was wounded, and owed his life to the gallantry, some said, of a slave; but Livy, always leaning to the poetical side, prefers the story which ascribed the rescue to his son, afterwards to be known as Scipio "Africanus." The Roman force had to recross the Po at night, break up their bridge,—so hastily that they left six hundred prisoners in the enemy's hands,—and take refuge under the walls of Placentia. Hannibal crossed the river by a bridge of boats, followed up his enemy, and offered them battle where they lay. But the consul was still disabled by his late wound, and had no confidence in his troops.

A large body of auxiliary Gauls had already broken out of camp, murdering the sentries, and gone over to Hannibal. Scipio again moved his quarters under cover of night, and fell back behind the little river Trebia. There he was joined by the other consul, Sempronius, who had been summoned in haste from Sicily, had thrown his army across the Straits of Messina, and marched in forty days through the whole length of Italy. His colleague being disabled, Sempronius had virtually the sole command; and he was eager to match himself with this young Carthaginian general before his own year of office should expire. Some inconsiderable successes in cavalry skirmishes encouraged him, spite of Scipio's warnings, to risk a general engagement. He had to cross the river to get at his enemy; and, in defiance of all military prudence, took his men into action wet, chilled with the cold, and without their morning meal. Yet, though the cavalry on the wings was soon driven in by the enemy, and thrown into confusion by his elephants, the admirable steadiness of the Roman legionaries might have saved the day, had not the Carthaginian made use of stratagem. A strong force of cavalry, planted judiciously in ambuscade, suddenly took them in the rear. The battle was now hopelessly lost; yet a large body cut their way through the enemy, and got to Placentia, where at nightfall they were joined by Scipio with such remains of the broken army as had found their way into camp. The Roman forces at once retreated —Sempronius into Etruria. Hannibal, after an attempt to cross the Apennines in terrible weather, in

which his troops suffered severely, wintered in Cisalpine Gaul—so far master of the country.

In accordance with the regular military policy of Rome, which on this point seems to us so inconvenient, the command for the next year passed into the hands of new consuls. Rome had been thrown into consternation by the late disaster, and great exertions were made to raise new levies for the spring. Hannibal had now crossed the Apennines, and made his way through the marshes below Florence, at the expense of considerable suffering to his men and himself. He rode, we are told, the only elephant that had survived the disasters of the Alps and the Apennines, and lost an eye from the inflammation caused by the exposure to weather which must have chilled his southern blood. Still he pressed on into Etruria, burning and plundering as he went.

One of the new consuls was Flaminius, who in a previous year of office had reduced the Cisalpine Gauls. He was not more successful than his predecessors. He allowed himself to be attacked by Hannibal in a defile near the lake Thrasymenus,* and suffered an overwhelming defeat. A thick mist, which concealed the enemy during their first attack, added to the confusion of the Romans. Their advance cut their way through, only to surrender next day to Maharbal's cavalry. The consul himself fell; and 15,000 of his men were either killed in the

* Near the modern village of Passignano. The little stream called '*Sanguinetto*,' which falls into the lake, bears its record of the bloodshed.

fight, or cut to pieces afterwards by the enemy's horse.

Livy appears to have taken his account of the battle and its results mainly from the history of Fabius Pictor, who himself served in the war—possibly was engaged on this occasion. But the story of the reception of the terrible news at Rome is a far more finished picture than any likely to have been found in the earlier historian.

"When the first tidings of this disaster reached Rome, great was the panic and confusion, and there was a general rush of the people into the Forum. Wives and mothers wandered about the streets, asking all they met what this sudden calamity was that men reported, and what had happened to the army. And when the crowd, like a great public meeting, made its way to the election courts and the senate-house, and appealed to the magistrates for information, at length, a little before sunset, Marcus Pomponius the prætor announced—'We have been beaten in a great battle.' And though no further particulars could be learnt from him, yet men caught vague rumours one from the other, and went home saying 'that the consul with the greater part of his force were cut to pieces; that the few who survived had either been made to pass under the yoke, or were scattered in flight throughout Etruria.' Various as the fate of the beaten army were the different forms of anxiety felt by those who had relatives serving under the consul: none knowing what their fate had been, and all uncertain what they had to hope or what to fear. Next day, and for some days afterwards, crowds thronged the gates, women in almost as great numbers as men,* waiting for

* Nothing but such a crisis could excuse this breach of Roman propriety.

some member of their family, or for news of him. They threw themselves upon all whom they met, with anxious inquiries, and could not be shaken off (especially from any whom they knew) until they had asked every particular from first to last. Then you might have marked the different countenances, as they parted from their informants, according as each had heard cheering or mournful news ; while, on their way home, friends crowded round them to congratulate or condole. The women showed their joy or grief most conspicuously. One mother, who met her son suddenly at the gate returning safe, is said to have expired on beholding him : another, who had heard a false report of her son's death, and was sitting weeping in her house, saw him returning, and died of over-joy. The prætors kept the senate sitting for several days from sunrise to sunset, consulting what commanders and what forces could be found, to resist the victorious Carthaginians."—(xxii. 7.)

But the rulers of the city showed no weakness. Fabius Maximus was named Dictator in the emergency, and Minucius Rufus his "Master of the Horse."

Though Hannibal was continuing his victorious march through Picenum and Apulia, Fabius, though superior in numbers, showed no disposition to engage him in the field. He was content to fo low and watch his movements, to keep him from the important towns, and, above all, from a march on Rome. Once, when he thought he had cut off his communications, the Carthaginian escaped him by stratagem ; two thousand oxen were driven into the hills at night, with lighted pine-torches tied to their horns, to give the appearance of a moving army, while Hannibal drew off his troops

in another direction. But Hannibal felt that in the Roman Dictator he had to deal with an able and wary opponent. The Master of the Horse, however, was a man of different temper, and chafed openly at the tactics of his chief, almost driving the troops into mutiny. During the absence of Fabius at Rome on public business, he gained some slight successes; and this encouraged the party at home, who were already discontented at their general's inaction, to demand the passing of a bill to put the authority of the Master of the Horse on a level with that of the Dictator. The result was that, having agreed to divide the troops between them, Minucius was tempted by Hannibal into an engagement, and would have been utterly routed but for the support of Fabius and his division. With that generous public spirit which so often redeemed the gravest faults in Roman officers, Minucius acknowledged his mistake, and put himself for the future under the orders of the Dictator as before. Fabius suddenly rose high in popular estimation both in the army and at Rome; and Hannibal, says Livy, "began at last to feel that he was fighting against Romans, and on Italian soil."

But the tenure of the Dictator's office, always brief and exceptional, ceased with the end of the year. The consuls who succeeded, however, carried on the campaign very much in the fashion which they had learnt from Fabius. Then came another change; and one of the new consuls, Terentius Varro—"a butcher's son," as his aristocratic opponents said, but at any rate a man of the people, and elected by plebeian votes—had

all the impatience and more than the imprudence of the late Master of the Horse. His colleague, Paulus Æmilius, who had been earnestly counselled by Fabius, was more cautious. There was again in the Roman camp the fatal evil of a divided authority, each consul commanding-in-chief on alternate days. The condition of the Carthaginian army was now critical in the extreme, for provisions were fast failing them; the Roman allies in Italy were growing impatient at seeing their lands ravaged with impunity by the invaders; so that both sides were eager for action. The rashness of Varro precipitated the event on unfavourable ground; and the result was the almost total destruction of the Roman army on the disastrous field of Cannæ. For a clear and distinct account of the battle, the student of military history must read Polybius, and not Livy, whose description, though highly picturesque, is sadly confused. As usual, the Roman cavalry was no match for that of the enemy; and Hasdrubal, with his Gallic and Spanish horse, after driving in those opposed to them, charged the Roman infantry in the rear. Æmilius had been wounded early in the day, and could no longer sit his horse; his officers and men dismounted and fought desperately round him, as the Scottish knights did round King James at Flodden, and with the same result. "They died where they stood." The consul was last seen sitting down covered with blood; an officer begged him to take his horse and save himself. He refused. "Tell them at Rome," said he, "to look to their watch and ward: and tell Fabius I remember his counsel

dying, as I did while I lived." Varro, with a few horsemen, escaped from the field to Venusia. 40,000 foot and 2700 cavalry were said to have been left dead on the field of battle, including nearly all the officers of highest rank, the gallant Minucius among the number; 3000 infantry and 300 horse were made prisoners. When Mago bore the news of his brother's great victory to Carthage, he poured out before the council there a bushel (some said three) of gold rings, each one taken from the finger of a Roman knight who had died at Cannæ.* Those who escaped to their own camp surrendered next day to Hannibal, except a small body who fought their way out and reached Canusium.

"Such," says Livy, "was the fight at Cannæ, not less memorable than the disaster at the Allia; if less grave in its consequences, inasmuch as the enemy did not follow up his success, yet more fatal in the utter destruction of the army. For the flight at the Allia, though it lost the city, saved the army." Hannibal missed the tide of opportunity. In vain did Maharbal—"the best cavalry officer of the finest cavalry service in the world"†—propose to ride forward at once, and urge his chief to follow him with the main body, straight for Rome, promising him that "in five days he should sup in the Capitol." Hannibal preferred to wait; and the Roman annalist admits

* The reader will be reminded of the four thousand gilt spurs said to have been gathered from the bodies of the French knights slain by the Flemings on the field of Courtrai, A.D. 1302—hence known as the "Battle of the Spurs."

† Arnold.

that, in his opinion, this delay was the salvation of the city. As to the panic and distress there, he despairs of giving his readers any adequate idea of it. "I fail under the burden of the task, and will not attempt to narrate it, since any description would only make it appear less than the reality." Two significant facts he mentions, which show the all but despairing efforts made by the authorities. Eight thousand slaves were armed and enrolled, and six thousand released criminals; and recourse was had to the horrible expedient of human sacrifices,—to propitiate, if it might be, the unknown deities who fought against Rome. Two Gauls and two Greek prisoners—male and female —were buried alive; "a horrible rite, by no means in accordance with Roman usage."

CHAPTER IX.

SECOND PUNIC WAR: CANNÆ TO ZAMA.

(BOOKS XXII.–XXX. B.C. 216–202.)

ONCE more the spirit of Rome rose superior to her misfortunes. News came in of the revolt of allies, of descents made by the Carthaginians on the coast of Sicily; yet "no word was spoken of peace;" and when Varro, whose rashness had caused the disaster, brought the shattered remains of his army to the gates of Rome, he received the public thanks of the senate,—"because he had not despaired of the commonwealth." In the general demoralisation which followed the defeat, some of the younger officers had formed the idea of giving up the cause of Italy as lost, and seeking refuge and service under Hiero or some other friendly potentate; but Varro had scorned such counsel, and young Scipio had burst in with his sword drawn upon a party who were met to discuss it, and threatened to cut down the first man who refused then and there to swear fidelity to the Republic.

Very different, and as it might seem to us moderns very harsh, was the view taken at Rome of the conduct of those troops who had allowed themselves to

be made prisoners at Cannæ. By Hannibal's permission, they had sent delegates to Rome to treat for their ransom; but the senate, unmoved by the piteous entreaties of their relatives, sternly decided that the services of men who had preferred life to honour were not worth the purchase. Even those troops who had escaped by flight were sentenced, by way of punishment, to serve in Sicily until the war should be concluded. Five years afterwards, when the authorities in their emergency were arming even slaves to serve in the legions, these men prayed leave to wipe out their disgrace in any hardest service that could be found in their native country; and the senate coldly rejected their prayer.

Hannibal moved into Samnium, and thence into the plains of Campania, receiving the submission of several towns, the most important of which was the rich town of Capua. This loss was felt by the Romans as only second to that of Rome itself. But the Carthaginian commander, whose strongest arm was his cavalry, did not attempt any great operations, and the winter spent by his army amidst the luxury of Capua is said to have demoralised it more than all the sufferings of the Alps or the campaign. Marcellus, now in command in that district, did little more than watch the enemy's movements.

In Gaul the Romans had been more unfortunate: a consul, Posthumius, was attacked in making his way through a forest (Forêt de Lago), and cut to pieces with great part of his army; and their progress there was checked for the present. The Roman fleet had

enough to do to watch the coasts of Italy, and to form a coalition of the Ætolians and other tribes on the Macedonian frontier against King Philip, with whom Hannibal had just concluded an alliance.

But in other quarters the tide was already turning for the Romans. In Sardinia, a great battle had been won by Manlius, who was in command there as prætor, against the combined forces of the Sardinians and Carthaginians, the latter having three of their generals taken prisoners. In Spain, a year before, the brothers Publius and Cnæus Scipio had driven the Carthaginians over the Ebro, and when they heard that Hasdrubal was marching strong reinforcements through the country to the aid of his brother Hannibal in Italy, they had united their forces, met him on the Ebro, and totally defeated him; thus materially crippling the great Carthaginian's operations against Rome. They now again gained a decisive victory, inflicting on the Carthaginians a loss of 13,000 killed, and making a considerable number of prisoners, besides what the Roman annalist evidently considers an important capture of "nine elephants." This success was at once followed by the defection of nearly all the Spanish tribes from the Carthaginian alliance; and both Sardinia and Spain were for the present secured to the Romans.

The next year (B.C. 214) saw the joint consulship of Quintus Fabius and Marcus Marcellus, "the Shield and Sword of Rome." The people were on the point of electing two other candidates, when Fabius, who as the outgoing consul was returning officer, bade them

reconsider their vote—"they had to elect a match for Hannibal." Nothing perhaps shows the true greatness of Fabius more than his thus boldly risking the charge of forcing himself upon the people; for there is no doubt that he had his own election in view, and there was no precedent for thus holding a consulship two years in succession.

Extraordinary exertions had been made to raise both men and money for the ensuing campaign; and two consular armies of unusual strength, under able commanders, now pressed Hannibal close in Campania. He failed in an attempt on Tarentum; his lieutenant Hanno was defeated by Gracchus at Beneventum; Samnium was ravaged by Fabius, in punishment of its revolt from Rome; and vigorous preparations were made for the siege of Capua.

Marcellus, however, was called off before the end of the year to the scene of his future glory in Sicily. King Hiero of Syracuse—for forty-seven years the steady ally of Rome—was dead, and had left the government to his grandson, a mere boy, caring only for his pleasures. His two uncles, his guardians and ministers, were inclined to the Carthaginian interest; and Hannibal had amongst other agents at his court a man of enterprise and ability in the person of Hippocrates. The young prince was assured that the Roman power was irretrievably broken; and, tempted by the offer of being made king of all Sicily, in spite of the advice of some older and wiser counsellors, he made an alliance with Carthage. He was assassinated very soon afterwards on an expedition against Leon-

tini; and the cry was raised in Syracuse for "a free Republic," and a re-alliance with Rome. Andranodorus, one of the young king's uncles, seized and held the citadel in the interests of the royalist party; but he and his friends surrendered it to the republicans when they found that the popular feeling was too strong. Accusations of plotting against the liberties of Syracuse, and of seeking to re-establish the "tyranny," were soon brought against him; and the result was an outbreak of popular fury, and an indiscriminate massacre of the whole party, and of all the descendants of Hiero. The Romans, as soon as they learnt the state of affairs, sent their fleet at once to Syracuse to support their own interests against those of Carthage; and this formidable demonstration encouraged their adherents in the city to renew the old alliance with Rome.

But Hippocrates, the zealous and energetic agent of Hannibal and Carthage, was by no means content with such an arrangement; and he found a centre of operations in the Sicilian town of Leontini, which was not inclined to submit itself either to Syracuse or to Rome. Marcellus now arrived to take the command in Sicily in person. He took Leontini by storm; and finding there a large body of deserters from the Roman fleet and army, he had two thousand of them first scourged and then beheaded. This terrible vengeance struck the Syracusan soldiers with a not unreasonable horror of Roman cruelty; Hippocrates and his brother, who had escaped from the slaughter at Leontini, were acknowledged as leaders by the army, and a counter-

revolution in favour of Carthage took place in the city of Syracuse, and the gates were closed against the Romans.

Marcellus at once invested the place by sea and land. The siege has an especial interest as the first instance on record of a scientific defence. A studious recluse of seventy-four, a mathematician and astronomer, for a long time baffled the unscientific efforts of the whole Roman force. This was Archimedes, who for many years had employed his skill in the service of King Hiero. It would appear that he first introduced the plan of loopholing the walls at different heights; his catapults and similar machines—the artillery of those times—were of all varieties of range and calibre; and there was one tremendous engine like an enormous crane projected from the walls, and heavily weighted at the nearer end, while the other was furnished with a huge grappling claw; this, when suddenly depressed, would catch hold of one of the enemy's ships (which were brought up to attack the sea-wall), lift it bodily out of the water, and then let it drop suddenly back so as to sink it with its whole crew. The defence was so successful, and the natural position of the city so strong, that the siege was speedily reduced to a close blockade. It was not until this had lasted a year that Marcellus at last gained possession of the city by a surprise. A weak place in the fortifications had been discovered, in the quarter called Epipolæ; and while the citizens were engaged in deep carousals at the festival of Diana, two picked cohorts scaled the walls at nightfall, and without

much difficulty made themselves masters both of that quarter and of the strong-work called Hexapylon. What remained was an easy conquest.

"When Marcellus entered the fortifications, and from the high ground looked down, and saw lying at his feet the city, wellnigh the fairest in these times, he is said to have shed tears, partly of joy at the great deed he had accomplished, partly of regret for the ancient glories of the place. The sinking of the Athenian fleet there, the destruction of two great armies and two renowned commanders,* came into his mind; the many wars waged against Carthage with varied success; its many powerful despots and kings —Hiero especially, not only as the most recent of its rulers, but memorable, above and beyond all that merit and fortune had given him, for his good services to the Roman people. When all this crowded on his memory, and the thought occurred that now in one moment all its magnificence would be given to the flames and reduced to ashes, he sent some Syracusans, who had been serving in his camp, to speak the enemy fair, and induce them to surrender."—(xxv. 24.)

A portion of the city was surrendered, but only to be given up to indiscriminate plunder—in spite of Marcellus's tears. The rest, with the citadel, still held out; and vigorous attempts were made by the Carthaginians to relieve it. But the force which was sent from Carthage perished almost to a man from malaria in the marshy ground where they lay—Hippocrates (who had broken out of Syracuse) among them. Their fleet also, partly from unfavourable winds, and partly, it would seem, from lack of spirit in its commander,

* Nicias and Demosthenes.

did not venture to encounter that of the Romans; and the discontent and mutiny of the foreign mercenaries within the city itself led at length to its betrayal to Marcellus. There was not much fighting at the capture; but in the scene of violence, plunder, and wanton bloodshed that followed, one notable life was lost. Archimedes was found, unconscious of all the noise and tumult round him, absorbed in working out a mathematical problem on a smooth bed of sand. To the great regret, it is said, of Marcellus, he was killed by a Roman soldier who knew nothing of science or its professors. The city was completely sacked by the soldiery; and the plunder, Livy tells us, was more valuable than would have been even that of Carthage itself.

Other towns in Sicily, which had revolted from Rome to Carthage when they saw as they thought their opportunity, now hastened to offer their submission; but Marcellus dealt with them all with the utmost severity, even putting to death the chief citizens of the anti-Roman party. His conduct left such a terrible impression on the memories of the Sicilians, that when in a subsequent consulship he was appointed to the command in the island, they sent to implore the Roman senate not to send him there. A half-caste officer of Hannibal's, Mutines, gave still some trouble in Sicily, and even repulsed Marcellus in a pitched battle. Marcellus's term of command had now expired, and he hurried to Rome to enjoy his triumph, leaving to one of the new consuls, Lævinus, the difficulty and the honour of completing the sub-

jugation of Sicily. He was able to inform the senate, at the expiration of his year of office, with a great amount of self-complacency, that the island was thoroughly got into order, and that not a Carthaginian was left there.

Our author's annalistic method has recorded these events in Sicily under the three successive years in which they took place. It is more convenient here to return for a while to the contemporary events in other fields where Rome was carrying on the war.* In Italy, Hannibal had surprised and taken Tarentum; Gracchus, one of the consuls who succeeded Fabius and Marcellus, was killed in an ambuscade; and an old centurion, of more courage than generalship, who succeeded to his command, was defeated and slain by Hannibal with 15,000 of his men; but all these disasters were compensated to the Romans by the fall of Capua in the following year.

The Romans were determined on the reduction of their rebel dependency. They drew round it all their available force in Italy; and after giving notice to all who would make their peace with Rome to evacuate it before a certain day, they encircled it with a triple line of works. Hannibal hastened to its relief; but his terrible cavalry could make no impression on the Roman lines; and with a sudden bold change of plan, by a rapid night-march he struck for Rome. He took nearly the same route that the Gauls had taken long ago; and the terror and confusion in the city at

* The chronology of these operations, as given by Livy, bears traces of confusion.

the news of his approach was scarcely less than had followed the disaster of the Allia. Though he encamped within three miles of the gates, his real object was but to draw off the investing army from Capua; and he had no means, and probably no thought, of attempting an assault on Rome. He plundered the rich lands round the city unchecked, spite of the rage and grief of the citizens, who had seen no enemy so close to their gates for nearly a hundred and fifty years. He rode up to reconnoitre in person, with his staff, Livy tells us, to the Colline gate; but that was all he saw of Rome. He gained no respite for Capua; only a very small portion of the besieging army was recalled for the defence of the capital; and baffled and disappointed, he retired upon Bruttium, and left the Capuans to their fate.

That fate was not long delayed, and it was terrible. They entertained no hopes of mercy from the Romans. Some of the chief citizens took poison before the surrender. Such senators as were found alive were scourged and then beheaded. It is said that, while they were bound for execution, an order from Rome reached the consul Fulvius for their reprieve; that he placed it in his bosom unread, and bade the execution proceed. Most of the inhabitants were sold for slaves, and all their lands and other property were confiscated. Capua had been Hannibal's one great conquest in Italy, and the blow to his cause there was proportionate.

In Spain matters had gone worse for the Romans. It is more than probable that in the account which

Livy has borrowed from earlier writers of the exploits of the two Scipios we have only the boastful exaggeration of their family annals; it is only certain that they were both in succession defeated and slain by Hasdrubal, a short time before the fall of Capua, and that the Romans were driven back beyond the Ebro. It was reserved for a younger member of the house to avenge the deaths of his relatives and retrieve the honour of Rome. But it is by no means certain that the acts of young Publius Scipio have not received the same kind of decoration in the family chronicle as those of his father and uncle. His extraordinary promise had led, we are told, to his election to public office before he was of legal age; and now, when a proconsul was to be chosen to succeed to the command in Spain, and men hung back from an honour which involved so much responsibility under such discouraging prospects, young Scipio came forward as a candidate, and was elected by acclamation.

He is so evidently a favourite, both with the Roman annalist and with Polybius whom he has followed, that we have his character drawn by partial hands. But there can be no question of his having been an extraordinary man, and of his exercising a kind of fascination over those who were brought in contact with him. Strange tales were told of his birth, and of a mysterious inspiration which he received, or thought he received, from heaven; of his spending hours alone in the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol before he engaged in any important business. All such tales he was at least at no pains to contra-

dict, and men regarded him with a certain awe as well as admiration.

He took out with him to Spain large reinforcements, and after wintering at Tarraco (Tarragona), crossed the Ebro in the spring, and marched straight upon New Carthage (Cartagena)—the most important of the Carthaginian towns, the base of their military operations, and the depot of their stores and treasure. He stormed it by crossing the wide lagoon which then lay at its back; and for some time the place was given up to general massacre and pillage. An immense booty was found there, besides naval stores and war material of all kinds. The artificers were forced into the Roman service, and the able-bodied citizens and their slaves were compelled to serve as rowers in the fleet. But there were other prisoners taken in the place to whom Scipio gave very different treatment. These were the hostages from the several towns of Spain, whom the Carthaginians had sent there for safe custody. The Roman commander, by a studied moderation and courtesy, sought to impress on them how much it would be to the advantage of themselves and their countrymen to be on the side of Rome rather than of Carthage. One anecdote will serve at once as an example of Scipio's policy, and of Livy's facility as a writer of romance.

"A captive was brought before him by his soldiers—a grown-up maiden of such remarkable beauty, that wherever she moved she attracted the eyes of all. Scipio inquired her country and her parentage, and ascertained amongst other things that she was affianced to a young chief of the

Celtiberi, whose name was Allucius. He at once sent for her lover and her parents from their homes, and heard in the meanwhile that the youth was passionately attached to her. As soon as they arrived, he addressed himself to the lover more particularly than to the parents. 'I address myself,' said he, 'as one young man to another, that there may be less embarrassment between us in this interview. When your betrothed bride was brought to me by our soldiers, I heard that you were very much in love with her—a fact which indeed her beauty makes me readily believe, inasmuch as, were I at liberty to indulge the passions natural to my age, especially in an honourable and lawful way, and if public duty did not engross all my thoughts, I might have claimed indulgence had I become desperately enamoured of some lady myself. Your passion at least I can favour, and I do. Your betrothed has been treated with the same respect while in my charge as she would have been under the roof of her own parents and your future connections. She has been kept safe for you, that I might present her to you untarnished, a gift worthy alike of myself and you. This one return I bargain for in repayment for this gift of mine—become the friend of the Roman people. And if you believe me to be a man of honour, as these tribes know my father and my uncle to have been, I would have you learn that there are many like us in the state of Rome; and that no nation can be named at this day upon earth whom you ought less to wish to have for enemies to you and yours, or should prefer as friends.' The young chief, overwhelmed with embarrassment and joy, grasped Scipio's hand, and called upon all the gods to repay his benefactor an obligation which it would never be in his own power to discharge in any way correspondent to his own feelings and Scipio's claims upon his gratitude. Then the maiden's parents and relatives were summoned. Finding that she was to be restored to them gratuitously, whereas they had come prepared with a

considerable weight of gold for her ransom, they began to entreat Scipio to receive it from them as a present, protesting that in so doing he would confer upon them an obligation not less than this free and honourable restoration of their daughter. Seeing them so earnest in their request, Scipio promised that he would accept the gold, and bade it be laid at his feet. Then, calling Allucius to him, he said, 'As an addition to the dowry which you will receive from your father-in-law, take this as my wedding present;' and he desired him to take the gold and keep it for himself. The bridegroom took his leave, delighted alike at the gift and the compliment, and went home to fill the ears of his countrymen with the praises of Scipio. 'There had come upon earth a hero like unto the gods, conquering all men not only by his valour, but by his kindness and munificence.' And he straightway made a levy of his retainers, and, with fifteen hundred picked horsemen, returned in a few days to Scipio."—(xxvi. 50.)

But neither the popularity of the new Roman general with all the Spanish tribes, nor a subsequent victory over Hasdrubal which is ascribed to him, enabled him to prevent the latter from marching to the support of his brother Hannibal in Italy.

Meanwhile the state of things in Italy itself looked gloomy in the extreme. In spite of Marcellus's conquest of Syracuse, in spite of the recovery of Capua, the distress in Rome was severe, and there was disaffection among her allies. Twelve of the thirty colonial towns distinctly refused the usual contributions of men and money—"they had neither men nor money to give." The resources of Rome would have failed utterly and at once, had the remaining eighteen followed the ex-

ample. But instead of this, they not only furnished the quota demanded, but said that "more was ready if required." The ravages of Hannibal made corn scarce and dear; and a new tax, absolutely necessary to maintain the navy, led to such imminent danger of insurrection, that the commons were only pacified by the gallant self-devotion and liberality of the senators and knights, who placed at the disposal of the treasury commissioners all their gold and silver plate and coined money, with only some small personal reservations. The sacred treasure, reserved for any great emergency, was also brought out and employed—"four thousand pounds' weight of gold."

The next campaigns were unfortunate. Of the commanders against Hannibal, Fulvius was killed, and his army destroyed; and Marcellus, consul for the sixth time in the following year, while reconnoitring with his cavalry, met his death in an ambuscade, in which also his colleague Crispinus was mortally wounded. Thus Rome lost both her consuls on one fatal day. The two armies threw themselves into Venusia and Capua. And now came news that Hasdrubal had slipped by Scipio in Spain, had turned the Pyrenees, crossed Gaul, and was on his way to join his brother Hannibal. He crossed the Alps by the same route which the latter had taken, but more rapidly, and with much less difficulty, than his brother had done. He seems to have marched through Lombardy without opposition; and Livius, the consul sent to oppose him on the frontier, was obliged to fall back

before him.* But the despatches which were to announce to his brother his arrival and his plans fell into the hands of the other consul, Claudius Nero, who lay at Venusia watching Hannibal; and he at once determined on a course which has always been admired for its boldness, and perhaps also for its success. He made a rapid night-march with a picked body of 7000 men, and before Hannibal missed him, was far on his road to join his colleague, and so crush Hasdrubal, if possible, by their united weight, before he could join his brother. The manœuvre was thoroughly successful. Unwillingly the Carthaginian, after an attempt at retreat, gave battle on the Metaurus river, and was there utterly defeated, with a loss which was no doubt heavy, however Roman boasts may have exaggerated it. Livy pays an honest tribute to the gallantry of Hasdrubal: great in many battles, he says, he was never so great as in this.

"He it was who kept his men up, while they fought, by cheering them, and facing every personal danger like themselves; he it was who, when they were tired out, and gave way from very weariness and fatigue, reawoke their spirit now by entreaties and now by reproaches; he rallied them when they fled, and restored the battle at many points where the struggle had ceased. At last, when it was clear that the day was the enemy's, refusing to survive the fate of the army which had followed him as leader, he spurred his horse right into one of the Roman cohorts. There he fell, fighting to the last, as became a son of Hamilcar and a brother of Hannibal."—(xxvii. 49.)

* As to the details of this campaign, Arnold remarks that "what we have in Livy is absolutely worthless."

Nero hurried back as rapidly as he came; found Hannibal still waiting news of his brother; sent two Carthaginian prisoners into his camp to bear the tidings of their defeat; and bade the severed head of Hasdrubal be thrown down in front of the Carthaginian outposts, that Hannibal might recognise the dead face (he had not looked on it for eleven years), and know by this sad token the fate of his brother's army. So much more of the barbarian spirit had a Roman consul, on the Roman annalist's own showing, than the great Carthaginian whom it was the fashion at Rome to call perfidious and cruel; for Hannibal had, not long ago, given honourable burial to the body of Marcellus, as he had to Gracchus in Lucania, to Paulus Æmilius after Cannæ, and as he sought to do in the case of Flaminius, the consul who fell at Lake Thrasymenus.

Always melodramatic, Livy tells us that when Hannibal looked on the severed head of his brother, he said that "he recognised there the fate of Carthage." Whatever be the truth of the story, there is no doubt that the great victory on the Metaurus was the turning-point in the fortunes of the contending powers. Hallam classes it amongst the few great battles "of which a contrary event would have essentially varied the drama of the world." Rome drew breath after it, as freed, almost beyond hope or expectation, from a terrible peril. It is hardly possible to do justice by any translation to the fine chapter in which the annalist describes the reception in the city of the good news.

It is the counter-picture to the scene after Thrasymenus.*

"While the city was in this state of anxious suspense, there came a rumour, vague at first, that two Narnian horsemen had ridden from the battle to the Roman force, which lay watching the passes of Umbria, with the news that the enemy had received a heavy blow. Men took it in with their ears rather than their minds, as too great and too joyful to be entertained in thought, or really believed. The very rapidity of the communication was an objection, for the battle was said to have taken place only two days before. Soon a letter was brought in from Manlius, from the camp, announcing the arrival of the horsemen. When this letter was carried through the Forum to the court of the city prætor, the senate rose in a body from their hall; and such a rush and struggle was made by the people towards the doors of the senate-house, that the courier could not make his way through, but was dragged to and fro by eager inquirers, demanding loudly that he should read it on the public rostra before he carried it in to the senate. At last the crowd was forced back, and kept under restraint by the authorities, and the joyful news was circulated by degrees, though men's minds were as yet unable to realise it. The letter was read in the senate first, then in public to the people; and, according to their various dispositions, some felt an assured joy, others would give no credit to the tale until they had either heard or seen despatches from the consuls themselves.

"Presently word was brought that official messengers were coming. Then young and old went forth to meet them, each longing to be the first to drink in such joyful tidings with eyes and ears. There was one continuous stream of people out as far as the Milvian bridge. The officers en-

* See p. 122.

tered the Forum, the centre of a crowd of all ranks. Some questioned them, and some those who escorted them, as to what had happened; and as each heard the news, that the enemy's forces and their commander were cut to pieces—that the Roman legions were safe—that the consuls were unharmed,—they at once imparted their joy to others. . . . The temples during the next three days were crowded; wives and mothers in holiday attire, leading their children with them, were giving thanks to heaven, and casting off all fear, as though the war were already ended."—(xxvii. 50, 51.)

Meanwhile the conquest of Spain was rapidly being accomplished under Scipio. He won a great victory over Hasdrubal, known as "the son of Gisgo," to distinguish him from the brother of Hannibal. Such towns as still held out against the Romans hastened to make their submission; and the defeated general embarked what remained of his army for Africa, leaving Spain for the present so far clear of Carthaginians, that Scipio's lieutenant, Silanus, was able to announce to him that "the war was over." But the boast came somewhat too soon.

The Roman commander was now eager to carry the war into the enemy's country. He was not content to be the conqueror of Spain: he longed to add to his glories the reduction of Carthage itself. He crossed at once into Africa, with some hope of securing to the Roman interests one of the most powerful of the native princes, Syphax, king of the Masæsylians, who had invited him to a conference. At his table Scipio found himself seated next to his late opponent, Hasdrubal Gisgo, and, if we may trust the partial historian,

charmed him, as he did all who came into personal relations with him, by the grace of his bearing and conversation. Thinking that he had secured Syphax —who appears to have been only playing with him— he returned to Spain, to find some new troubles there. He had to "punish" certain towns which had probably taken occasion of his absence to revolt; and he did so effectually. Then there arose a far more serious difficulty, in the mutiny of a portion of his own troops, on the ground of the hopeless arrears of pay, and their long absence from home; and in the midst of it he was seized with a dangerous illness. The report that he was dying roused some Spanish tribes once more to take up arms; and, as a proof of his great personal influence, and the widespread awe and admiration which he inspired, no sooner did their leaders hear he was recovering than they were struck with complete panic. The mutiny among his own men he put down with a strong hand, and with no little diplomacy: the ringleaders were cleverly secured, and straightway executed. With the revolted Spaniards, who now fought in sheer despair of pardon, he had a desperate battle; but he was completely victorious, and Mago, the last of the Carthaginian generals who clung to Spain, was summoned away to head a descent upon Liguria, and, if possible, to rally Northern Italy against the Romans.

Scipio himself hurried to Rome, to stand for the consulship. He was elected; but, to his great disappointment, he could not get a commission to take the command in Africa. Old Fabius Maximus—not too old to make a very long speech, in our annalist's pages

—protested against it as a patent imprudence, so long as Hannibal maintained his ground in Italy.

He did maintain his ground there four years longer, though he did scarcely more. He confined himself chiefly to Bruttium, and the Romans seem never to have ventured to attack him in the field; but the want of support from Carthage, the difficulty of maintaining his troops, and the Italian malaria, were far more harassing enemies. His brother Mago made his descent upon Genoa from the Balearic Isles, where he had collected a strong naval and land force; but though his capture of the town drew numbers of the Ligurians and Gauls to his standard, he was unable to carry out his instructions to effect a junction with Hannibal. He was defeated, after an obstinate battle, by the Roman force sent to oppose him, and was mortally wounded. It was at this juncture that both he and his brother were recalled to Africa, which he reached only to die.

Scipio had been prevented from making Africa the ostensible scene of his operations; but he had the permission of his government to cross over there, "if he held it to be for the interest of the state." He did hold it so to be; and amidst the general enthusiasm of his troops, picked for the service, and the admiration of the crowds of provincials who thronged the shore, with all solemn pomp and magnificence, and the prayers to heaven which he knew so well how to use with effect, he set sail from Lilybæum.

"After this prayer, a sacrifice was offered, and he cast the raw entrails of the victim, according to custom, into the

sea, and bade the trumpet sound for weighing anchor. They set sail with a stiff breeze in their favour, and were soon carried out of sight of land. At mid-day a fog came on, so that the ships with difficulty escaped running foul of one another. When they were well out at sea the wind slackened. During the following night the haze continued, but when the sun rose it dispersed, and the wind got up again. They now sighted land; and the pilot soon afterwards said to Scipio that they were not above five miles from the coast of Africa; that he could see Mercury's Point;* and that if he pleased to give orders to make for it, the whole fleet would be presently in harbour. When Scipio got sight of land, he prayed the gods that this his first view of Africa might be for his country's honour and his own: then bade the fleet spread sail and make for another landing-place lower down the coast. The wind was fair in that direction. But the fog, coming on about the same time as the day before, soon shut the land from sight, and as the fog grew thicker the wind dropped. Nightfall made their position difficult to ascertain; they therefore cast anchor, for fear the vessels might foul each other or run ashore. When day broke, the breeze sprang up again, the fog dispersed, and discovered the whole coast of Africa. Scipio asked what the name of the nearest headland was: and when he learnt that it was called 'Fair Point,'†—'I accept the omen,' said he; 'steer right for it.' For that point the fleet stood in, and there the whole force was landed."—(xxix. 27.)

His success was rapid. He had been disappointed in Syphax as an ally; but Massinissa, king of a Numidian tribe—a wily and treacherous barbarian, but an able leader of irregular cavalry—had just been driven

* Now Cape Bon.

† Pulchrum Promontorium; now Cape Farina.

from his dominions by this very Syphax, and took advantage of it to transfer his services from Carthage to the Romans, a step which he had long been meditating. Scipio had once laid him under obligation in Spain, and they had already been in correspondence. His cavalry was of the greatest use to the Romans in their new campaign. The camps of the Numidians and Carthaginians—mere wattled huts covered with thatch and dried leaves—were surprised and burnt; and in the massacre—for it could hardly be called a fight—which followed, 30,000 Carthaginians are said to have been killed, and the Numidian force of 60,000 men was either cut to pieces or dispersed.* Syphax was followed into Numidia, defeated, and sent prisoner to Rome, and Massinissa regained his kingdom.

It was not therefore before Hannibal's presence was needed at home that he, like his brother Mago, was summoned home from Italy. But Hannibal himself, thus torn from the field of his conquests and his hopes—though it was only what he had for some time expected—was not likely to take this view.

"He is said to have groaned aloud and ground his teeth, and scarcely to have refrained from tears, as he listened to the message of the envoys. When they had delivered themselves of their instructions, 'Ay,' said he, 'now they recall me in plain terms instead of by implication,—they who have so long been trying to drag me back by refusing me men or money. Hannibal is defeated—not by the Roman people, whom he has so often beaten and put to

* "The annals of war contain no bloodier tragedy."—Arnold.

flight, but by the Carthaginian government, their jealousy and envy. Not Scipio himself will boast and exult so much in this ignominious return of mine, as will Hanno, who seeks to effect the destruction of our house by the ruin of Carthage, since he can do it in no other way.' . . . Seldom was any man, leaving his native land for foreign exile, known to have parted from it with more evident sorrow than Hannibal showed in quitting the soil of an enemy. Often, as he looked back on the shores of Italy, he accused gods and men, and cursed himself and his folly, 'that he had not led his troops straight to Rome while their swords were yet red from the victory of Cannæ.'"—(xxx. 20.)

Scipio was closely blockading Utica, when envoys were sent to him from Carthage to sue for peace. The terms which he is said to have offered them, and they to have accepted, amounted almost to submission. The Carthaginians were to evacuate Italy, Gaul, and Spain; to cede to Rome all the islands which lay between Italy and Africa; to give up all their ships of war but twenty; and to pay the Romans a large indemnity in corn and money. Hard as the terms were, they had to be referred to Rome for approval; and a truce was agreed upon for this purpose. If we are to trust the Roman annalist, the truce was broken by the Carthaginians, elated at the prospect of Hannibal's return. The whole story is apocryphal, as are the details of the meeting which Livy records as having taken place between Hannibal and the Roman consul soon after his landing,—in which "both stood for a while silent, as though struck dumb by mutual admiration,"*.

* Book xxx., ch. 30.

and the story of the Carthaginian spies whom Scipio detected, and ordered to be led round his camp to see for themselves and report what they would to their chief. Whatever may have been the true history of the negotiations for peace, they ended in nothing; and the two commanders and their forces met on the field of Zama.*

The fight was long and obstinate. The eighty elephants which were ranged in the front of the Carthaginians, and on which they still placed great dependence, were left a free course to the Roman rear, through openings in the line, by Scipio's skilful arrangement, and so did little execution, and even broke to the wings against their own cavalry. Massinissa's horse did good service. But the deciding contest lay between the Roman legionaries, picked men as they all were, and Hannibal's veterans, soldiers by profession and training, who had followed him over the Alps and through Italy. Neither would give way, until Lælius and Massinissa with the Roman and Numidian horse, returning from the brief pursuit of the enemy's cavalry, charged their infantry in the rear. Then the day was over: 20,000 of the Carthaginians are said to have been killed, and as many taken prisoners. Scipio was advancing upon Carthage by sea, when a ship met him with a flag of truce. The terms he insisted on were even harder than before; Carthage was now to retain only ten ships; to pledge itself to engage in no war out of Africa itself, or even there without consent of the Romans; to maintain the Roman

* The real site of the battle is uncertain.

army in pay and rations for three months ; and to give a hundred hostages of the conqueror's selection. There was some hesitation in the Carthaginian senate as to their acceptance ; when Hannibal, who had escaped from the battle with a few horsemen, rose and spoke in favour of peace at any price. Peace was signed ; the great Punic War—or, as the Romans justly called it, the war with Hannibal—was over ; and the career of one of the greatest generals—if not the very greatest —of any time or country, was ended at the early age of forty-five. He lived nearly twenty years afterwards ; but we shall find him soon banished from Carthage (where he had always jealous enemies), at the demand of the Romans, and he never afterwards held any except a subordinate naval command under Antiochus of Syria.

CHAPTER X.

THE ROMANS IN GREECE.

(BOOKS XXX.–XXXIV. B.C. 200–194.)

WE have now arrived at the period in history when Rome comes into distinct contact with Greece. Philip V. of Macedon had made an alliance with Carthage, as we have seen, after Hannibal's great victory at Cannæ; but the hostilities between him and the Romans had not been carried on very actively; and the latter, fully occupied with Spain and Africa, had not been sorry to make a truce with Philip, which had now lasted some years.

But after the battle of Zama, appeals came in from more quarters than one for aid against the growing encroachments of Philip's ambition. One of his generals was investing Athens; his admirals at sea were endeavouring to make themselves masters of the Ægean, by humbling the naval power of Rhodes and of Attalus king of Pergamus, the old and faithful ally of Rome; and all, in their difficulty, turned their eyes to Rome. The reply which the Roman senate gave to the envoys from Rhodes and Pergamus was in a truly imperial tone: "The senate would see to the affairs of

Asia." Whether Philip heard of the answer or no, he was a match for them in lofty words. He had made himself master of all the important coast towns of Thrace, and was investing Abydos. The Roman commissioner who was sent to remonstrate with him was an Æmilius, somewhat young for his office. He spoke as Philip had not been accustomed to hear. The Macedonian answered with some dignity:—

"'Your youth, sir,' said he, 'and your personal advantages, and more than all, your Roman name, makes you use somewhat bold language. My desire is, in the first place, that you would remember your treaty with me, and maintain the peace. If you trouble me with war, I am prepared to make you feel that the Macedonian rule and the Macedonian name can win as great renown in war as the Roman.'"—(xxxi. 18.)

With the exception of the Acarnanians and Bœotians, all the Greek states either joined the Romans in the war against Philip or stood neutral. In B.C. 200, a Roman consular army crossed from Brundusium to Apollonia in Epirus. It was unlike, in many respects, the armies of the Punic wars. The men were all nominally volunteers for the service (for a levy had been found too unpopular); and there were in the force a thousand Numidian cavalry, and elephants brought from Carthage.

The war lingered on without any great result for two years, until it was terminated by a great victory won over Philip at Cynocephalæ by Titus Flamininus, a young Roman general of the new school, himself half a Greek in tastes and habits, but an energetic

and capable commander. The defeat was complete, and the Macedonian power was crushed. The phalanx once broken became a helpless mass of confusion; and the elephants, which had already done the Romans good service in these campaigns, contributed much to the victory. While the enemy lost 13,000 men in killed and prisoners, the Roman loss, according to Livy, was not more than 700. Philip was compelled to accept the terms which had been already offered by the Romans. He had to surrender all his conquests in Asia, in Greece, and on the coasts of the Ægean, retaining only his ancestral kingdom of Macedonia; to give up nearly all his fleet, to pay a large indemnity, and to become in matters of war and peace almost the vassal of Rome.

Flamininus made what was almost a triumphal progress through Greece to Corinth, to be present there at the great Isthmian games. His fancy was to produce an effect which we should now call sensational. Ten commissioners had arrived from Rome with the ratification of the conditions of peace.

"The Romans took their seats at the spectacle. Then the herald, with his trumpeter, according to custom, advanced into the centre of the arena, where proclamation of the games is wont to be made in solemn form; and when the trumpet had sounded for silence, spoke aloud as follows: 'The senate and people of Rome, and Titus Quinctius their general, having conquered King Philip and the Macedonians, hereby pronounce free and independent, and subject only to their own laws, the Corinthians, Phocians, and all the Locrians; the island of Eubœa, the Magnesians, the Thessalians, the Perrhæbians, and the Achæans of

Phthiotis.' He had recited all the states hitherto subject to King Philip. When the herald's words were heard, the joy was too great for the hearers to take it in all at once. Each could scarce believe he had heard aright; men looked at each other in amazement, as though it were all an empty dream. They questioned their neighbours as to the points in the proclamation which concerned themselves, mistrusting their own ears. The herald was recalled; every one wanted not only to hear but see this messenger of liberty: he repeated the words again. Then, when the joyful tidings were confirmed, there rose such a clamour of cheers, and clapping of hands, and so often repeated, as to show that of all blessings none is so dear to the masses as liberty. The games were then hurried through, for none had either thought or eyes for the show; so entirely did that one great joy preoccupy their minds, that they had no sense of other pleasures. When the games were over, all pressed hurriedly to where the Roman general sat; insomuch that, owing to the rush of the crowd to get near his person, eager to grasp his hand, and throwing wreaths and ribbon-knots upon him, he was almost in personal danger. However, he was a young man of three-and-thirty; and the vigour of youth, as well as his gratification in this realisation of his glories, gave him strength. Nor did this effusion of universal joy last only for the moment: it was revived for many days in men's thoughts and conversation. 'There was then one nation on earth which, at its own cost, its own toil and peril, would wage war for the liberties of others; and this it did not merely for contiguous or near neighbours, or peoples inhabiting the same continent; it would cross the seas, in order that there should be no unjust dominion throughout all the world, but that everywhere justice, law, and right should bear rule. By a single herald's voice, all the cities of Greece and Asia had been made free. To have conceived the hope of this, betokened a daring spirit; to have carried it into effect, showed equal valour and good fortune.'"—(xxxiii. 32, 33

One is tempted to ask, did Flamininus write his own bulletins of the war? But that he was a great favourite with the Greeks, and that he had a great admiration for many of their habits and tastes, seems certain. He would have conferred a more real freedom on Sparta if he had effectually delivered it from the domination of its tyrant Nabis, who had originally espoused the cause of Philip, but of whom the Romans had unscrupulously made a friend for their own purposes, until the continual complaints of his neighbours induced them to direct Flamininus to deal with him as he thought fit. He reduced him to something like quiet; and at the great Nemean games held at Argos under the presidency of the Roman general, a very similar scene took place to that at the Isthmus a year before. The "freedom" of Argos from the oppression of Nabis, into whose hands Philip had for his own purposes surrendered it, was solemnly announced, and again the Roman was hailed as the great liberator. When at the expiration of his prolonged command he took his leave of Greece at Corinth, he gave them the excellent advice which Greeks, then or since, have never been inclined to take. He ended his speech in these words:—

"Let their leaders, and the different ranks in each state, and the states amongst one another, strive for union and concord. So long as they were at one, neither king nor tyrant could be strong enough to harm them. Disunion and distrust gave every opportunity to watchful enemies. For the party which is worsted in an intestine quarrel will rather apply for help to foreign powers than yield to their own countrymen. He exhorted them to guard and main-

tain by their own exertions the liberty purchased by the arms of others, and restored to them by the good faith of strangers; that so the Roman people might feel that they had given freedom to men who were worthy of it, and that their service had been well bestowed."—(xxxiv. 49.)

They parted from him, says the chronicler, with tears, as children from a parent; and he was himself so affected as to be scarcely able to conclude his speech. Before he left, he procured from their gratitude the redemption from their present masters of a number of those unfortunate Romans who had been sold as slaves into Greece during the Punic wars, when the stern sentence of their countrymen had refused to pay their ransom.* Twelve hundred of them were found in Achaia alone. "Judge, then," says the historian, "how many, in that proportion, there were likely to have been in all Greece." His triumph at Rome lasted three days. It was magnificent with the works of Greek art which had been captured, chiefly from Philip; the golden crowns presented to the liberator by the several states—one hundred and fourteen; the captive princes and noble hostages, among them Demetrius, the young son of Philip, and Armenes, son of the tyrant Nabis: but the grandest feature in the show (Livy evidently has the good taste to think so) was the band of liberated Romans, who, with their heads shaven, in token of recovered freedom, followed the triumphant procession of their deliverer up the hill of the Capitol.

* See p. 129.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ROMANS IN ASIA.

(BOOKS XXXV.–XXXIX. B.C. 193–183.)

MACEDON had been humbled, and Rome was at liberty to turn her arms elsewhere. Antiochus of Syria, known as the Great, had for some time been extending his conquests on the coasts of Asia Minor, chiefly at the expense of the recognised dominions of the kings of Egypt. There was, in fact, an understanding between him and Philip that they were to divide Egypt between them. The present Ptolemy was a mere child; and the Romans, no doubt with their own objects in view, had lately taken him under their "protection." If Antiochus had anticipated their action by joining Philip before the fortunes of Macedon were ruined, events might very possibly have taken a different turn in the future; as it was, he had spirit enough to refuse the demand of Rome that he should restore his conquests from Ptolemy, but not enough strength to maintain his resistance. When he crossed into Greece on the invitation of the Ætolians, who had never acquiesced in the Roman policy, he found Philip of Macedon deaf to all proposals of an alliance against

Rome as a common enemy—an alliance which was offered too late—and dutifully siding with his new allies and masters against him. In vain Antiochus tried to make a stand at the old historic pass of Thermopylæ: he had to retire defeated from Greece, only to be followed into Asia, as Hannibal had warned him, by the unrelaxing grasp of Rome, "already affecting the empire of the world;" to be finally conquered at Magnesia, in the passes of Mount Sipylus, and reduced to accept humiliating terms, by another of the great family of the Scipios, Lucius Cornelius, known from these campaigns as "Asiaticus"—the first Roman commander who landed a hostile force in Asia. The battle which sealed the fate of Syria was fought, however, by his lieutenants, while Scipio lay ill in his tent. Again, as with the Carthaginians at Zama, the elephants brought into action by the Syrians turned on their own ranks and broke their formation, and their loss at Magnesia is estimated at 50,000 men.

This war with Antiochus introduces us once more to the hero of the Punic wars. The faction at Carthage which had always been opposed to Hannibal and his policy now denounced him to the Romans as engaged in negotiations with Antiochus. They at once sent to Carthage to complain, no doubt intending to demand his extradition. One man at Rome, to his great honour, protested against the course taken: it was Scipio, Hannibal's old antagonist, who best knew his worth. He said it was "unworthy of the dignity of the Roman people to listen to party accusations against such a man." Hannibal did not wait the result: he

fled at once to the court of Antiochus, which seems to imply that the report of his intentions was not without foundation. He was warmly received; but he could not persuade the Syrian to adopt his own vigorous policy, and carry the war at once into Italy rather than await the Romans in Greece. Antiochus gave him a naval command, for which he was probably unsuited, and in which he was unsuccessful.

A passage which our annalist quotes from an earlier Roman historian, Claudius Quadrigarius * (to whom, however, he never seems to give much credit as an authority), describes a singular interview as having taken place about this time between Hannibal and Scipio Africanus. The latter was, according to Claudius, one of the envoys sent from Rome to Antiochus. He and Hannibal met at Ephesus, where they had a conversation which Claudius thus recorded :—

"Scipio asked Hannibal, whom he held to be the greatest general? He replied, 'Alexander, king of Macedon; because he defeated enormous armies with a small force, and had traversed the remotest regions, which few men could hope even to get a sight of.' When he was asked whom he would place second, he said, 'Pyrrhus; he had first taught the laying out a camp: and besides this, no man ever showed better judgment in choosing his ground and placing his outposts. He had also such tact in winning men to himself, that the nations of Italy preferred to be governed by a foreign ruler, rather than by the Roman people who had stood at their head so long.' When he was pressed further as to whom he considered to be third, he

* He wrote about B.C. 100. We have only some scattered fragments of his history.

replied, 'Himself, unquestionably.' Then Scipio laughed, and said, 'What would you have said if *you* had conquered *me?*' 'In that case,' he replied, 'I should have stood before Alexander, and before Pyrrhus, and all other commanders.' The Punic astuteness displayed in the answer, and the unexpected turn of the compliment, gratified Scipio highly, as though Hannibal had purposely omitted him from the list of generals, as not admitting of comparison with them."—(xxxv. 14.)

One article in the peace made with Antiochus was a disgrace to the Roman name. It was stipulated (though Livy does not mention the fact) that he should surrender Hannibal to his implacable enemies. Their victim escaped, and took refuge with Prusias, king of Bithynia. Thither also Roman vengeance followed him in the person of Flamininus, who was determined to rid Rome of him by any means. Hannibal anticipated the treachery of his host, who had stationed soldiers at the doors of his lodging.

"He had always anticipated some such end to his life: both because he knew the unrelenting hatred the Romans bore him, and because he had little faith in the honour of princes. . . . He asked a slave for the poison which he had for some time kept ready for such an emergency. 'Let us free Rome from this anxiety,' said he, 'since they think it long to wait for an old man's death. The triumph which Flamininus will win over an unarmed and aged man is neither great nor glorious. Verily, this moment bears witness that the character of the Roman people has somewhat changed. Their fathers, when King Pyrrhus, an armed enemy, lay camped in Italy, forewarned him to beware of poison. These present men have sent one of their consulars on such an errand as this,—to urge Prusias

to the base murder of his guest.' Then, launching execrations against Prusias and his kingdom, and calling on the gods to witness his breach of faith and hospitality, he swallowed the draught. Such was the end of Hannibal." —(xxxix. 52.)

The Roman historian, writing what was deliberately intended as a chronicle of Rome's greatness, could not well speak more plainly of her behaviour to her great antagonist. The man who, spite of all his intensely Roman feeling, is catholic in his admiration of all that is noble, and scorn of what is mean and base—and this is Livy's great praise—could find it in his conscience to say no less. Without excusing it, without openly reproving it, except through the mouth of the Carthaginian, he drops the veil over this blotted page in the history of his country.

In the very same year, B.C. 183, there died at Rome Hannibal's great antagonist—it is hard to say his conqueror—Scipio "of Africa." There was a set made against the house of the Scipios, the motives of which, and its justice or injustice, would require a history of Roman political factions to explain. The hero of Zama was accused, wrongfully or otherwise, of peculation and embezzlement during his years of command. He met the charge with scorn; called for his account-books, it was said, and indignantly tore them up in the face of his accusers.

"When called upon for his defence, he strode through the crowd up to the Rostra, escorted by a large body of personal friends and dependants; and when he had obtained silence, he said—'This is the day, tribunes and people of

Rome, on which I fought Hannibal and the Carthaginians in a great battle with happy and successful result. Wherefore, since to-day it is but right to pause from strife and quarrel, I shall go hence straight to the Capitol, to do reverence to Jupiter, best and greatest, to Juno and Minerva, and all the other powers who guard our citadel: and I shall give them thanks that on this day, and on many a day besides, they bestowed on me the spirit and the power to serve the state. Do you, Romans, all who conveniently may, go with me, and pray the gods that you may ever have leaders like unto me; since, as from my seventeenth year to my old age your award of honours was ever in advance of my years, so no honour was ever paid me by you that I had not first earned by good service.' From the Rostra he moved on to the Capitol. At once the whole assemblage turned and followed him, until at last even the clerks and bailiffs deserted the magistrates, and not a man was left with them but a mob of slaves, and the crier of the court who summoned defendants. Accompanied by the people, he visited all the temples not only in the Capitol, but throughout the city. That day the popularity of Scipio rose almost higher, and his real greatness was more strongly felt, than when he rode through the city at his triumph over Syphax and the Carthaginians."—(xxxviii. 52.)

But, as Livy puts it, "that day was the last bright one that dawned for Publius Scipio." His enemies still insisted on his being brought to trial, and he as steadily refused to meet them. One of the tribunes, Tiberius Gracchus, though a personal enemy, would not join his colleagues in the act of impeachment.

"Shall the man who tamed Africa be trampled on by *you?* Was it for this he routed and overthrew four of the best generals of Carthage and four of her armies in Spain? for this that he took Syphax prisoner, conquered Hanni-

bal, made Carthage our vassal, drove Antiochus beyond the Taurus (for his brother Lucius admitted him to a share in this glory)—to fall a victim here to you two Petillii—that you should win renown for yourselves on Scipio? Shall no services of his own, no honours bestowed by you, ever make the retirement of a hero safe—nay, sacred—in your eyes? The old age of such men, if it cannot command your veneration, should surely claim your forbearance."—(xxxviii. 53.)

Even the accusers, we are told, were moved by these noble words, and the senate thanked the speaker "that he had sacrificed his private enmity to his public duty." The prosecution was dropped.

"From that time men spoke no more of Africanus. He spent the rest of his life at Liternum,* without a regret for Rome. They say that when dying he gave instructions that he should be buried there, and a monument there raised to him, that his last obsequies should not take place amongst his ungrateful fellow-citizens. A man worthy of all memory, yet rather from his conduct in war than in peace."—(xxxviii. 53.)

The enemies of the house were not satisfied without the impeachment of his brother, Lucius "of Asia." The charge brought against him was that of receiving bribes from Antiochus to grant him too favourable conditions of peace. He also is represented as meeting the accusation with a lofty contempt. But he was condemned, and his property confiscated to pay the

* Now Torre di Patria. The word "*Patria*" seems to corroborate the story of Scipio having made it his "country" instead of Rome.

claims made upon him. He was even imprisoned for a while, but soon set at liberty.

The case of the Scipios is only one of many indications in the author's pages that there was springing up at Rome an oligarchy of wealth, of a character very different from that of the old patrician nobility of earlier and simpler times. Rome had not only enlarged her boundaries by her conquests; she had opened a field in which her successful generals could enrich themselves and their families. The "grave and severe" life which had been the pride of the Roman was fast decaying: he was beginning to learn, from Greece and from the East, the lessons of self-indulgence and luxury. A pernicious effect is said to have been produced by the triumph of Manlius Vulso, in honour of his defeat of the Asiatic Gauls (the Gallo-Græci, or Galatians) in the year following the defeat of Antiochus. The display of wealth in his procession was such as had never yet been seen at Rome. "Two hundred golden crowns," and silver and gold in every form, coined and uncoined, made part of his show, and he distributed ostentatious largesses on the occasion to his soldiery. He was accused of having tolerated brigandage and licentiousness of every kind amongst them while in the East: and, in fact, he had delayed for some time his demand for a triumph, in fear of public impeachment.

"The taint of foreign luxury was imported into the city by the return of the army from Asia. They first introduced into Rome couches of gilded bronze, costly tapestry, hangings, and other textile fabrics; and, what was then con-

sidered extravagant in furniture, claw-tables and brackets. Then first female harpists and tambourine-players, and the jests of professional buffoons, came into fashion at entertainments: the entertainments themselves were given with more care and cost. The cook—who in old times was one of the lowest of the slaves in value and in importance—began to rise in price; and what had been a mere servile office came to be considered a profession. Yet what was seen then were only the germs of that luxury which was soon to spring up."—(xxxix. 6.)

One powerful voice was heard declaiming from time to time against this growing corruption of morals. Marcus Portius Cato, whether as prætor, consul, or censor, never ceased to urge a return to the old simpler life of Rome—with little effect. It is Livy's voice, too, as well as Cato's, which we hear in that long and vigorous declamation against the repeal of the Oppian sumptuary law, meant to repress the extravagances of women.* But while he rebukes the one sex for their display in dress and equipages, he does not spare the other: while he tells the women that "she who begins to be ashamed of what she ought not to be ashamed of, will soon begin *not* to be ashamed of what she ought;"—he warns the men against "the two great and opposite vices under which Rome was suffering—avarice and luxury, which are the ruin of all great commonwealths;" he tells them that "of all kinds of shame, the worst is the being ashamed of frugality and poverty;" and he deplores the day when works of art came in from Syracuse to outshine "the earthen

* Book xxxiv. ch. 2.

images of their Roman gods," and royal treasures found their way to Rome from Greece and Asia, which made his countrymen "rather captives than captors."

Cato did not speak without reason of the influence of "foreign superstitions" on the female mind at Rome. Addiction to sorcery, to incantations, to unhallowed orgies, and even to secret poisoning, was a charge brought from time to time against Roman matrons; and though in all probability exaggerated by panic, as all such charges commonly are, it must have rested on some ground of truth. There had been one of these panics at the termination of the Latin War (B.C. 335), which was, according to Livy, the first time such practices were discovered at Rome.* The account reads very much like one of the modern epidemics of witchcraft in our own country or in New England. Twenty matrons are first accused and apprehended on the evidence of a maid-servant; they in turn give information against others; and a hundred and twenty are at last convicted and put to death. But in the years which followed the Roman victories in Greece and Asia, the panic and the consequent proceedings were of a far more terrible nature. The worship of Cybele, with all its abominable rites, had been introduced from Asia, in compliance with popular demand, in the last years of the war with Hannibal, because an old prophecy had been found—or was said to have been found—in the Sibylline books, that "when a foreign enemy should

* Book viii. ch. 18.

carry war into Italy, he should be conquered and expelled, if the Mother of the Gods were carried to Rome." She had been brought accordingly, in solemn state, from Pessinus in Phrygia—a rough stone, which the native priests warranted to be the veritable Mother —which young Publius Scipio, the popular favourite, as "the most blameless man in the state," was commissioned to escort. It had been received by a deputation of matrons of noble birth, and set up in the temple of Victory. Chaldæan astrologers were naturalised in the city, and largely consulted. Certain rites connected with the worship of Bacchus had also been introduced by an Etrurian priest, which led to the vilest excesses. The measures taken by the authorities to cut out the cancer from the national life of Rome certainly did not err on the side of leniency. Two hundred women were convicted of poisoning their husbands: "seven thousand of both sexes" were condemned, most of them probably to death, as members of a secret association of the worst description;* and a few years afterwards, three thousand more were condemned for similar practices, and the wife of the consul Piso was executed for poisoning her husband. But when we read that the public authorities "offered a reward to any informer who should bring any of the guilty parties before them, or denounce any one in his absence,"—that "a panic seized the whole senate"—that so many fled in terror from the city as almost to put a stop to public business—that many of those who

* B.C. 186. Book xxxix. ch. 17.

were accused committed suicide at once—and that the prisoners, "when brought before the consuls, all confessed their guilt, and did not give them the trouble of a trial,"—no one who has read the history of such scenes, even in times which are considered more enlightened, can doubt but that here also the innocent suffered in greater numbers than the guilty.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FALL OF MACEDON.

(BOOKS XXXIX.–XLV. B.C. 190–167.)

PHILIP of Macedon had succumbed to the Roman arms; but he was neither humbled by his defeat nor satisfied with the terms of peace. Though the Romans had taken nothing for themselves, they had taken nearly everything from him. They had "freed" all the smaller states and towns which had so long looked to Philip as their lord and master, and had materially increased the domains of the kings of Pergamus, and thus raised to importance by the side of Macedon a rival of whom he had always been jealous. Besides this, Philip found himself now somewhat in the case of the wounded lion with whom all the meaner beasts take liberties in his distress. Towns over which he understood his rights to have been reserved repudiated his allegiance: disputes arose between him and his neighbours, and in every case the appeal was to Rome as the general referee and public "liberator." Livy puts the state of the case shrewdly enough:—

"The moment the idea spread amongst the different states which bordered on Macedonia that accusations and

complaints against Philip were listened to by the Romans with attention, a great many found it worth their while to complain. Each town and tribe on their own particular account, and even individuals in their own private interest (for all found the Macedonian a dangerous neighbour), came to Rome either in the hope of getting their grievances redressed, or at least to draw some solace from complaining of them."—(xxxix. 46.)

It is easy to imagine how intolerable such a state of things must have become to a prince of Philip's temperament, and who had recently held such a different position. Roman commissioners went here and there about Greece, hearing complaints and making inquiries, which, however honestly meant, must have chafed and humiliated the Macedonian beyond endurance. One of these commissions was held at Tempe in Thessaly, where the deputies of various aggrieved communities appeared, says the annalist, "in the unmistakable guise of accusers," while Philip sat there "like a prisoner on trial," before the high and mighty representatives of Rome. The dispute between him and the Thessalians, however important to them, has little interest now for us: the Roman commissioners postponed their decision; but Philip saw, or thought he saw, that he should get scant justice from such a court, and that the Romans were determined to crush him entirely. Their policy and his were in fact incompatible. He took his resolution, and made his preparations in quiet; but in order to gain time, he sent his younger son Demetrius to Rome, to try to make his peace there for the present. Demetrius, it will be remembered, had been given up by his father

as a hostage to the Romans, and after figuring in the train of Flamininus at his triumph, had spent some time in the city in a sort of honourable safe custody. He seems to have won the esteem of his hosts—possibly had adopted some Roman tastes and habits; at any rate, the Roman senate treated him with the greatest courtesy, assured him of their desire to do justice to all, and begged him to let his father understand "that all questions between him and the Roman people might be considered settled, owing to the good offices of his son."

The message was fatal to the young prince. His elder brother Perseus, jealous at finding the popularity of Demetrius greater than his own, slandered him to his father as being a Roman at heart, and a traitor to the interests of Philip and Macedon. "The Romans, no doubt, intended to raise their *protégé* to the throne: would Macedonia accept a king from the hands of Rome?" He even accused Demetrius of designing his father's murder. Philip listened too easily, and consented to his being put to death. From that moment he never knew a happy hour. He died two years afterwards,—chiefly, as the annalist thinks, "of regret for his lost son, and remorse for his own cruelty:" for the innocence of Demetrius was established when too late.

"The seeds of the new war with Rome were sown," says Livy, "by Philip. They bore their fruit under his successor Perseus,—a prince with many vigorous qualities, but lacking the genius of his father. The Roman senate, at his request, acknowledged him as

king and "their good friend," with diplomatic politeness; but they mistrusted him from the first. He took an early opportunity of opening negotiations with their old enemies of Carthage. A mysterious embassy from him (of which it may be presumed very little was known, since Livy dismisses it in two lines) was said to have been admitted to an audience by the Carthaginian senate "at night, in the temple of Æsculapius;" but it does not appear to have had any result. He took pains to win the affections of the various Greek states, and held a kind of review of the Macedonian army in the sacred neighbourhood of Delphi—the point where Greek religious tradition and national reverence centred. Rome, on her part, was renewing her alliance with young Ptolemy of Egypt, and receiving graciously assurances of goodwill, and apologies for being somewhat dilatory in paying his tribute, from Antiochus of Syria, surnamed Epiphanes—"the Brilliant"—son of their late antagonist. He too had been a hostage at Rome, and had conceived a respect for Roman character, or at least for Roman power, and was glad to be on the side of the strongest in the coming issue. Eumenes of Pergamus came in person to Rome, and warned the senate there of the preparations—corn, money, foreign mercenaries in addition to the national force of Macedonia—which Perseus was getting together in prospect of the coming struggle. Eumenes even hinted, according to Livy's version of his oration, at a possible invasion of Italy. Perseus also had his envoys at Rome; and the annalist, intentionally or otherwise, puts into the mouth

of their spokesman a reply which would show that there was a true imperial spirit in these Macedonian kings.

"His sovereign, he said, was desirous—nay, most anxious—that they should give credit to his assertion, in answer to such charges, that he had shown no hostility to Rome in word or deed; but, if he saw them determinedly bent on finding some pretext for war, he could take his own part with firmness and spirit. War was a game open to all, and the result of an appeal to arms was what no man could foretell."—(xlii. 14.)

There was a barbaric grandeur in the answer, given in such a presence; but if the account before us be true, the king was equally barbaric in his readiness to commit any kind of political murder. He tried to have Eumenes assassinated while sacrificing at Delphi, and very nearly succeeded. He next made an attempt to get the Roman ambassador in Greece poisoned in his apartments; and the discovery, real or pretended, of this attempt, seems to have filled up the cup of his iniquities in the eyes of Rome. Envoys were sent to demand satisfaction, and Perseus received and dismissed them, it was alleged, with a studied contempt, and even violent language, not according them even the ordinary hospitalities due to their office. War was resolved upon, and the preparations for it were on a scale commensurate with its importance; for the resources of Macedonia under Perseus were probably double what they had been under his father Philip. The Third Macedonian War, as it is commonly called, has scarcely been allowed its due weight in history.

Had Macedonia been supported, as Perseus hoped to have been, by the Asiatic princes, or by the states of Greece, the Romans might have been driven back upon Italy. But even the "royal marriages" on which Perseus had built his hopes—giving his sister to Prusias of Bithynia, and himself taking to wife a daughter of Seleucus (Philopator) of Syria—failed to afford him the support on which he calculated. Prusias—that wretched time-server who had lent himself to the assassination of Hannibal—looked on and waited the event; Seleucus was dead; and his brother and successor, Antiochus "the Brilliant," cared for his own interests, and not those of Macedonia, and was ready to take advantage of the Romans being occupied elsewhere to lay his hands on Egypt.

Perseus stood almost alone against Rome; Cotys, chief of the Odrysians, and ruler of all Eastern Thrace, furnished him with some of the best cavalry of the age, who did him good and gallant service; but, with this exception, and a small Illyrian contingent, Macedonia had to fight single-handed.

Livy notes some significant incidents in the enrolment at Rome of soldiers for the campaign. Much is implied in the apparently casual statement that "many veteran centurions and soldiers volunteered for the service, because they saw that men who had served in the former Macedonian war, or against Antiochus in Syria, *had come home rich.*"* The Roman legionary was no longer serving only for patriotism or for glory. Others protested against

* Book xlii. ch. 52.

being called upon to serve again when past the usual age, and asserted the right which was claimed, and appears to have been conceded, during the Samnite wars,* but which, like other popular rights, seems to have fallen into practical abeyance, of not being required to serve in an inferior rank to that which they held in their last campaign. The hard service which a Roman soldier sometimes went through is strikingly set forth in the protest of an old officer, one Spurius Ligustinus. It gives us also a little glimpse into the domestic life, of which the pages of the annalist, to our great loss, supply so little illustration. The simple gossip of the veteran's story has more interest for us moderns than the intrigues of Greeks and Asiatics, and the "little wars" of Rome with the various tribes of Spain and Gaul, which take up so much of these later Annals. He was of the old Sabine stock—the muscle and sinews of the Roman commonwealth.

"I am a Sabine, from Crustumina. My father left me some acres of land, and a little cottage, in which I was born and brought up, and there I live to this day. As soon as I was old enough, my father gave me for a wife his brother's daughter, who brought with her no dowry beyond her free birth and her modesty, and a fruitfulness which might have contented a far richer establishment. Six sons we have, and two daughters—both married. Four of my sons are grown to manhood, two are still youths. I first entered the service twenty-nine years ago. I served as a private soldier for two years against King Philip, in the army which first landed in Macedonia; in the third year Quinctius Flamininus gave me the command of the tenth

* See p. 87.

company of Hastati, as a reward for good service. When we had beaten Philip and the Macedonians, and were brought home and disbanded, I volunteered again at once, and went with Marcus Porcius (Cato) into Spain. That no commander living was a keener observer and judge of a soldier's merit, is what all know who have served for any time under him and other generals. He selected me to command the first company of Hastati. A third time I volunteered into the army that was sent against the Ætolians and Antiochus; I was given by Acilius the first company of Principes.* When Antiochus was repulsed, and the Ætolians reduced, we were brought back to Italy. Then I served two years in the annual levies. Then I made two campaigns in Spain. I was brought home by Flaccus amongst others whom he selected for distinguished services to attend his triumph: at the request of the prætor Gracchus, I went with him into his province. Four times within a few years I was made senior regimental officer; four-and-thirty times I have received good-service rewards from my commanding officers; I have won six civic crowns for saving comrades' lives; I have served twenty-two years in the army, and I am above fifty years old. Even if I had not yet served my full time, and if my age did not entitle me to exemption, still, seeing that I can give you four soldiers in place of one, consul and fellow-citizens, I might fairly ask for my discharge. But I wish you to understand that what I have said is simply to do myself justice: for my part, as long as any one who has the levying of troops thinks me fit to fight, I am never going to excuse myself. The chiefs may give me what rank they think I deserve, —they have the ordering of that. I shall do my best that no one in the army ranks before me in doing his duty—as I always have done; and that my commanding officers and all who have served with me can witness."—(xlii. 34.)

* These were gradual steps in rank: the last was the chief centurion.

He ended by begging his fellow-soldiers not to stand upon their strict privileges, but take service at once. He was introduced into the senate, and received a vote of thanks; and was at once appointed to one of the highest regimental commands.

Perseus, we are told, was surprised, or affected so to be, at the prompt measures taken by the Romans. He sent to offer satisfaction for any complaints which could be shown to be well grounded. The haughty reply of the senate was that Licinius the consul would shortly be in Macedonia with his army, and the king could explain himself to him. He tried further negotiations; but the final result was that his envoys were ordered "to quit Rome at once, and Italy within thirty days."

The war lasted four years. In the first campaign the Romans had an incompetent commander in the consul Licinius, and the splendid Thracian cavalry were irresistible in their sweeping charges. The Romans were defeated in a great battle, and Perseus gladly took the opportunity of offering to make peace on the terms that had been conceded to his father Philip. But the Romans had the merit (or, as Dr Arnold seems to thinks it, the fault*) of never confessing a defeat. They refused to listen to the advances of Perseus, and the war went on; still, on the side of Rome, under generals more or less unequal to their work, until Paulus Æmilius, son of the consul who had died so gallantly at Cannæ, was elected the second time to the consulship, B.C. 168. Above sixty

* Hist. of Rom. Comm. i. 15.

years old, but hale and vigorous, he was a strict disciplinarian, and as judicious as he was brave. He concluded the war in a few months, by the great victory of Pydna. The description given of the veteran general in the battle is, unfortunately, one of the many mutilated passages in this imperfect Decade, and has been filled in by a later and inferior hand. When he saw his vanguard giving way, as they did before the first onset of the Macedonian phalanx, "he tore his cloak in sheer indignation." The sight of the old man rushing into the fight and exposing himself like the youngest officer, recalled the men to their duty. It was a desperate and doubtful fight, though of short duration; but, the phalanx once broken, the Roman victory was complete. An hour was enough to decide the fate of Macedonia. 20,000 of the Macedonians were left dead on the field: Livy would have us believe that the Romans only lost 100 men. They made 11,000 prisoners. The Macedonian and Thracian cavalry left the field almost without striking a blow. They escorted the king, who is said to have been the first to fly, to Amphipolis; and in two days all Macedonia was at the feet of the Romans. Perseus was pursued to Samothrace, and there taken prisoner, and led captive, with his two young sons, before the consul's chariot in his triumph at Rome.

"It was not only Perseus who just then presented an instance of the mutability of human fortunes, led in chains before the chariot of his conqueror through the capital of his enemies; but even the conqueror Paulus, in all the glory of his purple and gold. Of the two sons whom he had

kept at home (he had parted with the others, to be adopted), the sole remaining heirs of his name, his fortunes, and his house, the younger, twelve years old, died five days before the triumph; the elder, of fourteen, four days afterwards: boys who might have hoped to have ridden in their father's chariot in their robes of honour, anticipating similar triumphs for themselves."—(xlv. 40.)

Paulus himself is made to refer touchingly to this bereavement in his public speech a few days afterwards, alluding to that jealousy of the Higher Powers which was held, in the Roman creed almost as much as in that of Greece, to follow all too great exaltation of mortal prosperity.

"I trust the public fortunes may be ransomed from reverse by my own bitter personal sorrow, inasmuch as my triumph has been preceded and followed by the deaths of my two sons. Perseus, though in his own captivity he saw his children led captive, still has them safe: I, who have triumphed in his defeat, came from the funeral of one son, in my chariot from the Capitol, to the death-bed of another; and of my many children, there is none surviving to bear the name of Æmilius Paulus."—(xlv. 41.)

The unfortunate successor of Alexander the Great died in exile at Alba, and Macedonia finally became a Roman province. But at this point the Annals of Livy fail us—his remaining books have disappeared. Yet this accidental termination can scarcely be called abrupt; for Polybius dates from this battle of Pydna the full establishment of the universal empire of Rome.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

It has been impossible, in the limits of this volume, to examine critically into the historical truth of the statements contained in these voluminous Annals. The keenest and most learned inquirers are by no means agreed in their estimate of Livy as a historical authority. Between the sweeping statement of Macaulay, that "no historian with whom we are acquainted has shown so complete an indifference to truth," and the chivalrous "Plea" put forth in his defence by Dr Dyer,* there is room for various degrees of faith or scepticism. His leading purpose was undoubtedly first to celebrate the growth of his country's glory, and secondly to charm by his narrative and dramatic powers the educated readers of the court of Augustus. If he sometimes disguised the truth for his purposes, it was rather an artistic than a moral dishonesty: it was the same kind of delinquency as that of the painter who plants or cuts down his tree in the foreground, in order to improve the composition of his picture; or who translates liberally on his canvas the homely features of his sitter. Livy

* A Plea for Livy.

wanted many qualifications which we should consider indispensable for a national historian. He wrote of war as a civilian, of constitutional history as a layman, of antiquities as a gossip; and of many things which we look for in a comprehensive history—of art, of literature, of domestic manners—he does not write at all. Of geography he seems to have known nothing, and his best defence is that he professes nothing. He ought to have had some acquaintance with the Alps, and might have at least settled for us the question of Hannibal's route; but he does not, and evidently does not care to do so. It is impossible to follow him in any account of a campaign. His only attempt at a geographical description, so far as we know, was, curiously enough, that of our own island: it was contained in a portion of his history now lost to us, and if we may judge from the vagueness of his other notices, the loss is no great matter. Gibbon half apologises for this defect in him as a military historian, by saying that he wrote as "a man of letters, covered with the dust of his library;" but to imagine Livy as poring over old manuscripts and charters, and ransacking a hundred volumes (if he had them) to verify a date or an incident, would be a great mistake. He seems to have balanced, in some off-hand way, the varying statements of the half-dozen authors whom he consulted (possibly he had no more to consult), to have adopted, as he more than once almost confesses, that which seemed to him the most picturesque and best adapted for his purpose, and to have built up on it his own rich and fluent narrative.

Yet it is true that with all this utter want of the critical and judicial faculties which go so far to make a great historian—and though he dealt with facts very much on the principle that, when they did not favour his purpose as the chronicler of the national glory, it was "so much the worse for the facts"—he has, to use M. Taine's words,* done more for Roman history than all who have striven to reconstruct him. The impression he has left on us of the grandeur of Rome, and the steps by which she reached it, is the true one. The charm of his narrative is not spoilt—it even sometimes gains in interest—by his intensely Roman feeling. Our own national spirit goes a long way to excuse him when he ascribes to Carthaginians, to Greeks, to Asiatics, "perfidy," and boastfulness, and falsehood, as though they were vices abhorrent to Roman nature: if they were not unknown in Romans as they were, at least he repudiates them for Romans as they should be. Much has been said as to his injustice to the character of Hannibal. But, in the first place, he is not nearly so unjust to him as were the national poets of Rome; and in their case and in his, wide allowance must be made for the light in which the patriot poet or chronicler looks upon the invader of his country. Not to introduce any modern instances,—are we much surprised that the Jesuits in Spain should have painted Sir Francis Drake as half man and half devil, and the rest of the English nation as little better than fiends? And do we remember how our own writers of the day slandered and cari-

* Essai sur Tite Live, p. 179.

catured the great Napoleon? But, after all, the impression which we gain of Hannibal from the pages of Livy is that he was beyond comparison the greatest general of his age; counterpoising in his own person, if not outweighing, the various abilities of the successive commanders—some of them remarkable men—whom Rome sent into the field against him. Consciously or unconsciously,—whether his admiration for the man overcame his national prejudice, or the instinct of the artist selected that grand figure for his model,—he has made the mighty Carthaginian the hero of his tale.

For an artist Livy is, when all has been said, far more than a historian. The word historian means, in its very derivation, a patient inquirer into facts and circumstances; and that Livy was not. It was the powers of the poet, the novelist, the dramatist, which he possessed in such large measure, and these have given to his pages a lasting interest, undiminished even when his story is no longer accepted in all cases as trustworthy. Above all, he carries his readers with him by his great gift of oratory—the gift which perhaps the Romans, like the Athenians, in their pride of civilisation, valued beyond all others, and which has by no means lost its position amongst ourselves.

END OF LIVY.

J. B. Lippincott, Philadelphia.

OVID

BY THE

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THE extracts from the 'Metamorphoses' are, with one exception (marked "C."), taken from Mr Henry King's admirable version of that poem (Blackwood & Sons, 1871). The translations in Chapter II. marked "D.," are from a volume to which Dryden and others contributed. A passage from the Epistle of Laodamia to Protesilaus, and also the Elegy on the death of Tibullus, both in the same chapter, are taken—the former, from a little collection of Translations and Poems by Miss E. Garland (Liverpool, 1842); the latter (a translation by Professor Nichol) from Mr James Cranstoun's 'Elegies of Tibullus.' For the other translations, except where an obligation is specially acknowledged, I am myself responsible.

As regards the banishment of the Poet, I have to express my obligations to an article by Dr Dyer, published in the 'Classical Museum.'

A. C.

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OVID.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE—THE AUGUSTAN AGE OF ROMAN LOVE-POETRY.

Ovid, like Horace, is his own biographer. In some respects he is even more communicative than his fellow-poet. Horace, for instance, is reticent, as a rule, about his own compositions. The writer of the Odes might, for all we know, be a different man from the author of the Satires or the author of the Epistles. Ovid, on the contrary, takes good care that his readers should be well acquainted with the list of his works. Then, again, there is something very shadowy and unreal about the beauties to whom Horace pours forth his passion or his reproaches. Lydia, Chloe, Barine, Lalage, Glycera — there is scarcely one of them all whom we may venture to pronounce anything more than a creation of the poet's fancy. But Ovid's Corinna, the one mistress to whom he dedicates his song, is only too real. Who she was, of what rank

and character, the learned have disputed; but that she was a real personage no one doubts. And then he gives us the most copious and exact information about his birthplace, his family, his education, his marriage, his fortunes in general. Yet, for all this, the personality of the man himself seems to elude us. Some one has said that we should recognise Horace were we to meet him in the street. Short and corpulent, the sunny and cheerful youthfulness of his face belying his white hair, his gay figure seems familiar to us. We are acquainted with all his tastes and habits; he confesses his faults; his virtues show themselves. Ovid does not give us such confidences. The most exact statement that he ever makes about his own character—that though his verse was loose his life was pure—we must be permitted to disbelieve. The real Ovid is almost as unknown to us as is the real Virgil. Nevertheless, there is more to be said of him than can be contained within the limits of this volume. And here it may be said, once for all, that much will have to be omitted, not only for want of space, but for yet more imperative reasons of morality and good taste.

Publius Ovidius Naso was born at Sulmo, a town in Peligni, a district of Northern Italy which took its name from one of the Samnite tribes. The Samnites, Rome's stoutest antagonist in her early struggles for the supremacy of Italy, nearly overthrew her empire when it had been extended over all the shores of the Mediterranean. It was with the Marsi, the neighbours of the Peligni on the west, that the war of the

Italian allies against Rome, commonly called by historians the Social War, began. Ovid recounts, with a pride which may seem strange in a loyal Roman, the part which his own countrymen had taken in the struggle—

> "Whom freedom's voice to noble warfare led,
> When their own allies were the Romans' dread."

But in truth the poet was not venturing on any dangerous ground in thus writing. The cause of the allies had been closely connected with the cause of the democracy. And the Roman empire, like another empire of our own times, had inherited the democratic traditions. "Their cause," says Velleius Paterculus, a younger contemporary of Ovid, and conspicuous for his flattery of Augustus and Tiberius, "was as righteous as their fate was terrible, for they sought to be citizens of the state whose sway they defended with their swords." The emperors would find no offence in sympathy with the opponents of that aristocracy on the ruins of whose power their own throne was founded. The poet speaks more than once of the fertility and healthfulness of his native district. These blessings it chiefly owed to its copious and unfailing streams. Its pastures never dried up, even under the scorching suns of an Italian summer. Its water-meadows are specially mentioned. It produced wheat in abundance; and its light fine soil was even better adapted for the vine and the olive. The town of Sulmo boasted a high antiquity. A fanciful etymology found in the word the name of a companion of

Æneas, sprung from the Phrygian Solymi,* to whom that chieftain had given one of his daughters in marriage. It took the side of the vanquished party in the struggle between Marius and Sulla, and suffered cruelly in consequence. More fortunate in the next civil war, it opened its gates to Julius Cæsar. Ovid (he always called himself Naso †) belonged to one of the oldest families in this town. It was of equestrian or knightly rank, and had possessed this distinction for many generations. "In my family," he says, "you will find knights up through an endless line of ancestry;" and he looks down, just as among ourselves a baronet looks down on a knight, on men who had won that honour for themselves.

"I never climbed, not I, from step to step."

And he complains loudly to the faithless Corinna—

"Some knight, with wealth by wounds but newly earned,
Full-fed on slaughter, is preferred to *me!*"

The poet was born on March the 20th, 43 B.C. He marks the year by speaking of it as that

"In which both consuls met an equal fate."

These consuls were Hirtius and Pansa, both of whom perished at the siege of Mutina, fighting against Mark Antony. The Roman Republic virtually perished with

* The same origin was assigned, on equally good grounds, to Jerusalem. "Hierosolyma" was, of course, the sacred (*hieros*) city of the Solymi!

† Most of the writers who mention him follow the same practice, but Tacitus and the Younger Seneca speak of him as Ovidius.

them, though we may be sure that had they lived they could not have prolonged its existence. Ovid's birth coincides appropriately enough with the beginning of the imperial system. The day is noted as being the second of the five days' festival to Minerva (March 19-23). Minerva was the patroness of learning; and Juvenal tells us that ambitious young scholars were wont at this time to address to images of the goddess which cost them a penny of their pocket-money their prayers for success and fame. He had a brother who was his elder by exactly a year—

"A double birthday-offering kept the day."

The brothers were carefully educated, and were sent at an early age to the best teachers in Rome. Their father intended that both should follow the profession of an advocate. The intention suited the inclinations of the elder; the heart of the youngest was otherwise inclined. He wrote verses "by stealth," just as Frank Osbaldistone wrote them in the counting-house at Bordeaux. And Ovid's father was just as contemptuous as the elder Osbaldistone of the unprofitable pursuit. The poet says that he was moved by the paternal admonitions,—admonitions which indeed there were obvious ways of enforcing. He applied himself seriously to the business of learning his profession. The best known of those who have been mentioned as his teachers were Porcius Latro, by birth a Spaniard, who had migrated to Rome under the patronage of Augustus, and Arellius Fuscus, a rival professor of the rhetorical art. It was Latro's

practice to teach his pupils by declaiming before them; Fuscus, with what we may conjecture to have been a more effective method, made the youths themselves declaim. The Elder Seneca* speaks of having heard Ovid perform such an exercise before Fuscus. "His speech," he says, "could not then be called anything else than poetry out of metre." But he adds that the poet had while a student a high reputation as a declaimer; and he speaks strongly in praise of the particular discourse which he had himself happened to hear, describing it as one of marked ability, though somewhat wanting in order. The poetical character of the young student's oratory—a character quite out of keeping, it should be remarked, with the genius of Latin eloquence—exactly suits what Ovid says of himself—

"Whate'er I sought to say was still in verse;"

which may be paraphrased by Pope's famous line—

"I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came."

Seneca further tells us that he had a special fondness for dealing with moral themes, and he gives some interesting instances of expressions in the poems which were borrowed from the declamations of his master, Latro. The brothers assumed, in due time, the toga, or distinguishing dress of manhood.† This robe, as sons of a knight of ancient family, and aspirants, it was

* He was the father of the Younger Seneca, Nero's tutor, and of Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia (Acts xviii.), and grandfather of the poet Lucan.

† This was commonly done on completing the sixteenth year.

presumed, to public life, they were permitted to wear with the broad edge of purple which distinguished the senator. The elder brother died immediately after completing his twentieth year, and this event removed the objection which the father had made to the indulgence of Ovid's poetical tastes. The family property, which was not of more than moderate extent, would not have to be divided, and there was no longer any necessity why the only son should follow a lucrative profession.

About this time we may place Ovid's visit to Athens. A single line contains all the mention that he makes of it, but this informs us that he went there for purposes of study. What particular study he followed we do not know. It could scarcely have been moral philosophy, which Horace tells us had been his own favourite subject there; rhetoric he had probably, by this time, resolved to abandon. But Athens, which may be described as the university of the Roman world, doubtless contained professors of the *belles lettres*, as well as of severer studies; and we may feel sure that the poet took this opportunity of perfecting his knowledge of the Greek literature and language. Possibly his stay at Athens was followed or interrupted by a tour which he made in company with the poet Macer, the younger of that name, whose friendship he retained until the end of his life. This tour included the famous Greek cities of western Asia Minor. As Macer found the subject of his verse in the Trojan war, the friends probably visited the site of the famous city. Ovid, we know, was once there; and, in these days of Trojan dis-

coveries, it may be interesting to remember that he speaks of himself as having seen the temple of Pallas. From Asia Minor they passed to Sicily, where they spent the greater part of a year;—a happy time, to which Ovid, addressing his old companions, in one of the letters of his exile, turns with pathetic regret.

Returning to the capital, he did not at once give up the prospect of a public career. On the contrary, he sought some of the minor offices in which the aspirant for promotion commonly began his course. We find him filling a post which seems singularly incongruous with his tastes and pursuits. He was made one of the *Triumviri Capitales*, officials who combined, to a certain degree, the duties of our police magistrates and undersheriffs. They took the preliminary examination in cases of serious crimes, exercised a summary jurisdiction, both civil and criminal, in causes where slaves, or other persons not citizens, were concerned, inspected prisons, and superintended the execution of criminals. There were other Triumviri, however, who had duties connected with the coining of money, and Ovid's words are so vague as to leave it uncertain which of the two offices he filled. He also afterwards became a member of the "Court of the Hundred," which had an extensive and important jurisdiction in both civil and criminal matters. In this he was promoted to be one of the ten superintendents (*decemviri*) who formed the council of the presiding judge. He seems also to have occasionally acted as an arbitrator or referee. The profession of an advocate he never followed. An expression that has been sometimes taken to mean that he did

so, really refers to his position in the Court of the Hundred. "The fate of men accused," he says, seeking to prove to Augustus that he had been a man of integrity, "was intrusted to me without damage." He was now one of the "Twenty" who were regarded as candidates for the higher offices in the state, and for seats in the senate,* and who enjoyed the distinction of sitting among senators in the orchestra seats of the circus and the amphitheatre. The time soon came when he had definitely to choose whether he would follow public life, or rather that shadow of it which was left to Roman citizens under the Empire. Members of the "Twenty," on attaining their twenty-fourth year, became eligible for the quæstorship, an office connected with the revenue—the lowest in grade of the magistracies, properly so called, but giving a seat in the senate. Ovid declined to become a candidate for the office. He exchanged the broad purple stripe which he had worn as a possible senator, for the narrower stripe which belonged to his hereditary rank as a knight. We must now regard him as a private gentleman of Rome, well-born, and of respectable but not ample means. His parents were still living, and he hints in one place that he had to content himself with a moderate allowance.

Very early in life, when, as he says himself, he was "almost a boy," Ovid was married to a wife probably

* The "Twenty" were made up in this way: three Commissioners of Police (the *Triumviri Capitales*, mentioned before), three Commissioners of the Mint, four Commissioners of Roads, and ten Superintendents of the Court of the Hundred.

chosen for him by his father. The match, he gives us to understand, brought him neither honour nor profit. Probably her conduct was not without reproach, and her fortune did not answer his expectations. She was speedily divorced. Another wife was soon found by him or for him. All that we know of her is, that she was a native of the Etrurian town of Falisci. He confesses that he had no fault to find with her; but the second marriage was, nevertheless, of as short duration as the first. It is easy to gather the cause from the poet's own confessions about himself.

The literary society of which the young poet now found himself a recognised member, was perhaps the most brilliant which has ever been collected in one place. The Athens of Pericles in one point surpassed it in the magnitude of individual genius. But in extent, in variety of literary power, the Rome of Augustus stands pre-eminent in the history of letters. That pre-eminence, indeed, has been recorded in the name which it has bequeathed to following times.

"Augustan" is the epithet that has been applied in more than one instance to the age in which a national literature has attained its greatest development. In our own history it signifies the period of which Pope was in poetry the most brilliant representative. Used of Roman literature, it may be taken to denote, speaking somewhat loosely, the former half of the reign of Augustus. Virgil, Livy, Horace, Sallust, the greatest of the names which adorned it, had grown to manhood while the Republic still stood; Ovid, who may be said to close the period, was, as we have seen, born on the

last day of Roman freedom. But, indeed, the best days of the Augustan age had almost passed when Ovid became a member of the literary society of the capital. The man who was, in one sense, its ruling spirit, no longer possessed the power which he had used so generously and wisely for the encouragement of genius. For in this case, as in so many others, the ruler has usurped the honour which belongs to the minister. It was Mæcenas, not Augustus, who made the imperial court the abode of letters. The emperor deserves only the credit of possessing culture sufficient to appreciate the genius which his minister had discovered. But the power of Mæcenas did not last beyond the first ten years of Augustus's reign. Though not ostensibly disgraced, he no longer shared, or indeed could have desired to share—so bitter was the wrong which he had suffered from his master—the emperor's friendship. Though still nominally a Councillor of State, he had actually retired into private life. Retaining, if we may judge from what we know of Horace, the private friendship of those whom he had assisted, he no longer bestowed his patronage on rising genius. We find, accordingly, that Ovid never mentions his name. Nor was the young poet ever admitted to the intimacy of Augustus, whose court probably somewhat changed its tone after the retirement of the great literary minister.

For the older poets, whom he was privileged to see or know, Ovid describes himself as having felt an unbounded veneration :—

"In every bard I saw a form divine."

"Virgil I did but see" (a phrase which has become almost proverbial*), he says, in his interesting account of his poetical acquaintances and friends. Virgil certainly visited Rome some time between the years B.C. 23, when Marcellus died,† and B.C. 20, the date of his own death, for he recited before the imperial family the magnificent eulogy on the young prince which adorns the sixth book of the Æneid. Very likely it was on this occasion that Ovid saw him. His habits —for he loved the country as truly as did Horace— and the feebleness of his health, seem to have made him a stranger at Rome during the latter years of his life.

Another great contemporary Ovid mentions in these words—

"The tuneful Horace held our ears enchained."

"Tuneful," indeed, is a word which but feebly expresses the original epithet (*numerosus*). "That master of melody" is a more adequate rendering, and it is fit praise for one who had no predecessor or successor among his countrymen in his power of versification. There is nothing to indicate the existence of any friendship between the two poets. Horace was by more than twenty years the elder, and was beginning to weary of the life of pleasure upon which the younger man was just entering.

Not a single line has been preserved of three other

* "Virgilium tantum vidi."

† Marcellus was the nephew of Augustus.

of the poets whom Ovid regarded with such reverence. PONTICUS—

"For epic song renowned"—

wrote a poem in heroic—*i.e.*, hexameter—verse on the war of the "Seven against Thebes." Time has been peculiarly cruel to the world in not suffering it to survive, if we are to trust Propertius, who affirms, "as he hopes to be happy," that Ponticus was a match for Homer himself. Of BASSUS we absolutely know nothing but what Ovid tells us, that he was famous for his dramatic verse. ÆMILIUS MACER, of Verona, a fellow-countryman, and, as Ovid expressly mentions that he was much his own junior, probably a contemporary of Catullus, wrote poems, doubtless modelled after Greek originals, on birds, and noxious serpents, and the healing qualities of herbs. Another MACER, who has been mentioned already as Ovid's companion in travel, wrote about the Trojan war. Of DOMITIUS MARSUS, an elegiac poet, time has spared a beautiful epigram commemorating the death of Tibullus. It would be easy to prolong the list. In the last of his "Letters from the Pontus," Ovid names, each with a phrase descriptive of his genius or his work, the poets contemporary with himself. There are about thirty of them. Of some we do not know even the names, the poet having thought it sufficient to mention or allude to their principal works. Many of these who are named we do not find mentioned elsewhere, and Ovid's brief phrase is all that is left of them. The works of all have either perished altogether or survive in insignificant fragments.*

* The reader will be glad to see a noble utterance that has

Burmann, the most learned of Ovid's editors, says of Maximus Cotta, the last on the list,—"Him and Capella and others oblivion has overwhelmed with inexorable night. Would that these poets, or, at least, the best part of them, had come down to us, and other foolish and useless books had remained sunk in eternal darkness!"

Happily for us, a kinder fate has spared the works of two out of the three poets whom Ovid has named as his predecessors and teachers in his own peculiar art of amatory verse. "He," says the poet, speaking of the untimely death of Tibullus, "was thy successor, Gallus; Propertius was his; I was myself the fourth in the order of time." The same collocation of names is repeated more than once, and never without expressions that indicate the pride which Ovid felt in being associated with men of such genius. This judgment has been ratified by modern taste. Some critics have not hesitated to prefer the happiest efforts of Tibullus and Propertius (the poems of Gallus have been entirely lost) to anything of the same kind that came from the pen of Ovid. The plan of this series includes, for obvious reasons of convenience, the works of Tibullus and Propertius in the volume which will give an account of Catullus. They may be dismissed, for the present, with the briefest notice. Fate, says Ovid of Tibullus, refused the time which might have made us friends. The very elegant memorial which he dedicated to his

been preserved of one of their number: "All that I once have given still is mine" (*Hoc habeo quodcunque dedi*).

memory * is scarcely expressive of a personal sorrow. With Propertius he was on terms of intimacy :—

"To me by terms of closest friendship bound."

"Friendship" indeed hardly expresses the term (*sodalitium*) which the poet uses, and which implies a certain formal tie. Readers will remember that in the ancient world, where there was seldom anything ennobling in the relation of the sexes, friendship assumed a dignity and importance which it scarcely possesses in the social or moral systems of modern life. Of Gallus, the founder of the school, a longer account may be given.

Caius Cornelius Gallus, born at Forum Iulii (now Fréjus, in the Riviera), was, like Horace, of low birth, but received, like him, an education superior to his station. He studied under one of the best teachers of the age, and had Virgil for one of his schoolfellows. After the murder of Julius Cæsar, he joined the party of Octavianus (better known by his later title of Augustus), and was appointed by him one of the three commissioners charged with the distribution of the confiscated lands of the North Italian colonies among the discharged veterans. In this capacity he had the opportunity of serving his old friend. Mantua, though

* Graceful and elegant as it is, it cannot be classed with the finest works of its kind. The "Lycidas" of Milton, the "Adonaïs" of Shelley, and Mr Matthew Arnold's "Thyrsis," are all incomparably superior to it. It is entirely a work of art. There is little or nothing of personal feeling in it.

guiltless of any offence against the victorious party, was included in the confiscation; and the estate of Virgil, which was situated in one of the neighbouring villages, was seized. Gallus exerted himself to get it restored to its owner. The poet repaid him by most graceful praise of the poetical powers which Gallus probably valued more than his reputation as a soldier. In one of his pastorals he makes the god Silenus sing—

> "How Gallus, wandering by Permessian streams,
> Some Muse conducted to th' Aonian hills,
> And how the tuneful choir of Phœbus rose
> To greet their mortal guest, while Linus spake,
> Old Linus, shepherd of the deathless song,
> His hair with flowers and bitter parsley crowned—
> 'Take thou these pipes, the Muses' gift to thee,
> As erst their gift to Ascra's aged bard;
> With them he knew to draw from down the cliff
> The sturdy mountain-ash trees. Sing on these
> How Grynia's grove was planted, till there stand
> No forest dearer to Apollo's heart.'"

Another of the pastorals, the tenth and last, has the name of "Gallus" for its title, and celebrates in exquisite verse the unhappy passion of the soldier-poet for the faithless Lycoris. It has been thought, on the strength of a somewhat obscure passage in Ovid's elegy on the death of Tibullus, that Gallus behaved in a less friendly manner to that poet. The departed bard, we are told, would meet his fellow-singers Catullus and Calvus in the Elysian fields—,

"And thou too, Gallus, if they did thee wrong,
Who spake of friendship shamed, wilt join the throng."

Tibullus certainly lost, and apparently failed to recover, a great part of his property; and it has been conjectured that the influence of Gallus was used to obstruct restitution. Perhaps a more plausible explanation may be found in the circumstances that brought his career to an end. He had rendered great services in that final struggle with Mark Antony which put the undivided empire into the hands of Augustus, and was appointed in reward to the government of Egypt, then for the first time a Roman province. This elevation turned, or was said to have turned, his head. Accused of having used insulting words about Augustus, he was recalled. Other charges were brought against him, and were investigated by the senate, with the result that his property was confiscated, and that he was sent into exile. Unable to bear the disgrace, he fell upon his sword. He was in his fortieth year. We can judge of his poetical merit only by the statements of his contemporaries; but if these are to be trusted, they were of the very highest order.* His amatory poems consisted of four books of elegies addressed to Lycoris.

"Gallus to east and west is known, and fame
With Gallus joins his own Lycoris' name."

One reflection strikes us forcibly as we compare

* Quintilian, however, says of his poetry that it was "somewhat harsh."

Ovid with his predecessors and contemporaries—a reflection which, whatever the qualities in which they may be allowed to have excelled him, explains and justifies the higher rank which he has received in the judgment of posterity. He was cast, so to speak, in a larger mould, and made of stronger stuff. Nothing is more significant of this than the very superiority of his physical constitution. They almost without exception (we are not speaking now of Horace and Virgil) passed away in the very prime of their youth. Catullus died, when we do not know, but certainly before the age which opened to a Roman citizen the highest offices of state. He comes to meet Tibullus in the Elysian fields, "his *youthful* brows with ivy crowned." Calvus, his closest friend, died at thirty-six; Gallus, Tibullus, Propertius, were not older when they passed away. The fiery passion which shines through their verse, and which often gives it a more genuine ring than we find in Ovid's smoother song, consumed them. Ovid was more master of himself. Nor was his intellectual life limited to the expression of passion. His mind was braced by the severe studies that produced the 'Transmutations' and the 'Roman Calendar.' With this stronger, more practical, more varied intellect went along the more enduring physical frame. He had nearly reached his sixtieth year before he succumbed to the miseries and privations of a protracted exile. And sixty years of Roman life correspond, it must be remembered, to at least seventy among those who, like ourselves, date the beginning of manhood not from sixteen, but only nominally even from

twenty-one. We may perhaps find a parallel, at least partially appropriate, in the contrast between Shakespeare and his more sturdy and healthful soul and frame, and his short-lived predecessors in the dramatic art, Marlowe and Greene, men of genius both, but consumed, as it were, by the fire with which he was inspired.

CHAPTER II.

THE LOVE-POEMS.

Under this title are included four productions which —to speak of those works alone which have come down to us—formed the literary occupation of Ovid from his twentieth to his forty-second year. These four are 'The Epistles of the Heroines,' 'The Loves,' 'The Art of Love,' and 'Remedies for Love.' It is in the second of these, doubtless, that we have the earliest of the poet's productions that survive. He tells us that he recited his juvenile poems to a public audience, for the first time, when his beard had been twice or thrice shaved. Shaving the beard seems to have been a fixed epoch in a young Roman's life, occurring somewhere about his twenty-first or twenty-second year. He also tells us that of these poems Corinna had been the inspiring subject, and Corinna, we know, is celebrated in 'The Loves.' As this book, however, in the form in which we now have it, is a second edition, and as it makes express mention of 'The Epistles of the Heroines' as a work already published, it will be convenient to speak first of the latter poem. It consists of twenty-

one* letters, supposed to have been written by women famous in legend, to absent husbands or lovers. Ovid claims the idea as original, and we must therefore suppose that the one example of the kind which we find in Propertius was imitated from him—a supposition which gives as a probable date for the publication of the Letters, the poet's twenty-fifth year (B.C. 18). Penelope, the faithful wife, whom the twenty years' absence of her lord has not been able to estrange, writes to the wandering Ulysses; Phyllis, daughter of the Thracian king Sithon, complains of the long delay of her Athenian lover, Demophoon, in the land whither he had gone to prepare, as he said, for their marriage; the deserted Ariadne sends her reproaches after Theseus; Medea, with mingled threats and entreaties, seeks to turn Jason from the new marriage which he is contemplating; and Dido,† a figure which Ovid has borrowed from the beautiful episode of the 'Æneid,' alternately appeals to the pity and denounces the perfidy of her Trojan lover. These are some of the subjects which the poet has chosen. The idea of the book, it must be confessed, is not a peculiarly happy one. Sometimes it has an almost ludicrous air. There is an absurdity, as Bayle suggests, in the notion of the post reaching to

* The authenticity of some of this number is doubted, or, we might say, more than doubted. But the question is beside our present purpose.

† It may be as well to remind the reader that though the legend of Dido is much older than the 'Æneid,' the introduction of Æneas into it is Virgil's own idea—a gross anachronism, by the way, with which, however, no reader of the fourth book of the 'Æneid' will reproach him.

Naxos, the desolate island from whose shore Ariadne has seen the departing sails of the treacherous Theseus. Nor is there even an attempt at giving any colouring appropriate to the time and place to which the several letters are supposed to belong. Penelope, Dido, Ariadne are all alike refined and well-educated persons, just like the great Roman ladies whom the poet used to meet in daily life. This artificial writing, absolutely without all that is called realism, was characteristic of Ovid's age, and we cannot make it a special charge against him. But it has certainly a wearying effect, which is increased by the sameness and monotony of the subject-matter of the Epistles. The names are different, the circumstances are changed according as the several stories demand, but the theme is ever the same—love, now angry and full of reproaches, now tender and condescending to entreaty. Nor is that love the "maiden passion" which has supplied in modern times the theme of poems and romances without number. It is the fierce emotion, guilty or wrathful, though sometimes, it must be allowed, melting into genuine pathos and tenderness, of betrayed maidens and outraged wives. But, on the other hand, though the theme is the same, the variety of expression is endless. The skill with which Ovid continues, again and again, to say the same thing without repeating himself, is astonishing. In this respect no poet has ever shown himself more thoroughly a master of his art. Feeling, too, real though not elevated, often makes itself felt in the midst of the artificial sentiment; if the style is disfigured with conceits, it is always exquisitely

polished; the language is universally easy and transparent, and the verse an unbroken flow of exquisite melody.

Of all the Epistles, the one which for purity and tenderness most commends itself to our taste, is that addressed by the Thessalian princess Laodamia to her husband Protesilaus. He had joined the expedition of the Greeks against Troy, and was the destined victim of the prophecy which foretold the death of the Greek chieftain who should be the first to leap from the ships on to the Trojan shore. Readers of Wordsworth will remember the beautiful poem in which he has treated that part of the legend which relates how Jove granted to the prayers of the widowed queen that her hero should for a brief space of time revisit the earth. Laodamia had heard that her husband and his companions were detained at Aulis by contrary winds. 'Why had not the winds been contrary when he left his home? They had been too favourable—favourable for the sailor, not for the lover. As long as she could see, she had watched the departing sails. When they vanished, she had seemed to pass from life, and could wish that she never had been recalled—for her, life was sorrow. How could she wear her royal robes while her husband was enduring the toil and wretchedness of war? Accursed beauty of Paris that had wrought such woe! Accursed vengeance of Menelaus that would be fatal to so many! How foolish the enterprise of the Greeks! Surely the man who had dared to carry off the daughter of Tyndarus would be able to keep her. And there was some dreadful

Hector of whom she had heard; let Protesilaus beware of him. Let him always fight as one who remembered that there was a wife waiting for him at home. It was Menelaus who had been wronged; let it be Menelaus who should exact vengeance. A rumour had reached her that the first chief to touch Trojan soil must fall. Let Protesilaus be careful not to be he. Rather let his be the last of the thousand ships —the last in going, but the first to return. Now she mourned for him night and day. The dreams in which she hoped to meet her husband did but bring back his pale image. This made her pray to the gods and burn incense on every altar in Thessaly. When would he return and tell the tale of his deeds? But the hope suggested the dreadful thought of Troy and the dangers of the sea. The sea, indeed, seemed to forbid their journey. If it was so, what madness to go! The delay was not an accident; it was an intimation from heaven. Let them return while they could. But no! She will recall the wish. She will pray for favourable winds. If only it was not so far away!' And then she contrasts the sorrows of her own loneliness with what she cannot but think the happier lot of those who were shut up in the walls of Troy:—

"Ah! Trojan women (happier far than we),
Fain in your lot would I partaker be!
If ye must mourn o'er some dead hero's bier,
And all the dangers of the war are near,
With you at least the fair and youthful bride
May arm her husband, in becoming pride;
Lift the fierce helmet to his gallant brow,
And, with a trembling hand, his sword bestow;

With fingers all unused the weapon brace,
And gaze with fondest love upon his face!
How sweet to both this office she will make—
How many a kiss receive—how many take!
When all equipped she leads him from the door,
Her fond commands how oft repeating o'er:—
'Return victorious, and thine arms enshrine—
Return, beloved, to these arms of mine!'
Nor shall these fond commands be all in vain,
Her hero-husband will return again.
Amid the battle's din and clashing swords
He still will listen to her parting words;
And, if more prudent, still, ah! not less brave,
One thought for her and for his home will save."

The letter of Sappho, the famous poetess of Lesbos, to Phaon, a beautiful youth who had betrayed her love, is founded on a less pleasing story—a story, too, which has no foundation either in the remains—miserably scanty, alas! but full of beauty—of the great singer, or in any authentic records of her life. It might well have been passed over had it not been illustrated by the genius of Pope. Pope never attempted the part of a faithful translator; but his verse has a freedom and a glow which leave the faithful translator in despair. And his polished antithetical style is as suitable, it should be said, to the artificial and rhetorical verse of Ovid, as it is incongruous with the simple grandeur of Homer. It is thus that he renders the passage in which Sappho announces her intention to try the famous remedy for hopeless love, the leap from the Leucadian rock:—

"A spring there is, where silver waters show,
Clear as a glass, the shining sands below;

A flowery lotus spreads its arms above,
Shades all the banks, and seems itself a grove:
Eternal greens the mossy margin grace,
Watched by the sylvan genius of the place.
Here as I lay, and swelled with tears the flood,
Before my sight a watery virgin stood:
She stood and cried, 'Oh, you that love in vain,
Fly hence, and seek the fair Leucadian main!
There stands a rock, from whose impending steep
Apollo's fane surveys the rolling deep;
There injured lovers, leaping from above,
Their flames extinguish and forget to love.
Deucalion once with hopeless fury burned,
In vain he loved, relentless Pyrrha scorned:
But when from hence he plunged into the main,
Deucalion scorned and Pyrrha loved in vain.
Hence, Sappho, haste! from high Leucadia throw
Thy wretched weight, nor dread the deeps below.'
She spoke, and vanished with the voice—I rise,
And silent tears fall trickling from my eyes.
I go, ye nymphs, those rocks and seas to prove:
And much I fear; but ah! how much I love!
I go, ye nymphs, where furious love inspires;
Let female fears submit to female fires.
To rocks and seas I fly from Phaon's hate,
And hope from seas and rocks a milder fate.
Ye gentle gales, below my body blow,
And softly lay me on the waves below!
And then, kind Love, my sinking limbs sustain,
Spread thy soft wings, and waft me o'er the main,
Nor let a lover's death the guiltless flood profane!
On Phœbus' shrine my harp I'll then bestow,
And this inscription shall be placed below—
'Here she who sung to him that did inspire,
Sappho to Phœbus consecrates her lyre;
What suits with Sappho, Phœbus, suits with thee—
The gift, the giver, and the god agree.'"

We have 'The Loves,' as has been said, in a second edition. "Five books," says the poet in his prefatory quatrain, "have been reduced to three." "Though you find no pleasure in reading us," the volumes are made to say to the reader, "we shall at least, when thus diminished by two, vex you less." A question immediately presents itself, Who was the Corinna whom he celebrates in these poems? It has often been argued, and that by critics of no small authority, that she was no less famous a personage than Julia, daughter of the Emperor Augustus by his first wife Scribonia. This indeed is expressly stated as a fact by Sidonius Apollinaris, a poet of the fifth century, and a somewhat distinguished personage, first as a politician, and afterwards as the bishop of Clermont in Auvergne. Of Julia the briefest account will be the best. She was wife successively of Marcus Marcellus, nephew to Augustus; of Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa; and of Tiberius, afterwards emperor. This last union was most unhappy. Tiberius had been compelled to divorce a wife whom he dearly loved, and he found himself bound to a woman whose profligacy was conspicuous even in a profligate age. After a short union he retired into a voluntary exile; and Augustus then became aware of what all Rome had long known, that his daughter was an abandoned woman. He banished her from Italy, and kept her in a rigorous imprisonment, which was never relaxed till her death. There is nothing, therefore, in the character of Julia that is inconsistent with her being the Corinna of Ovid's poems. We can even find some confirmation of the

theory. Corinna, it is evident, did not belong to that class of freed-women which included the Delia of Tibullus and the Cynthia of Propertius. Sometimes we are led to believe that she was a lady of high social position. Her apartments were guarded by a eunuch—not a common circumstance in Rome, and obviously the mark of a wealthy household. That she was married the poet expressly states. And a curious coincidence has been pointed out which, though it does not go very far, may be allowed to make for the identification with Julia. This princess had lost much of her hair through the unsparing use of dyes.* And we find Ovid remonstrating with Corinna on her folly in producing in the same way the same disfigurement :—

"No weeds destroyed them with their fatal juice,
Nor canst thou witches' magic charms accuse,
Nor rival's love, nor dire enchantments blame,
Nor envy's blasting tongue, nor fever's flame ;
The mischief by thy own fair hands was wrought,
Nor dost thou suffer for another's fault.
How oft I bade thee, but in vain, beware
The venomed essence that destroyed thy hair !
Now with new arts thou shalt thy friends amuse,
And curls, of German captives borrowed, use.
Drusus to Rome their vanquished nation sends,
And the fair slave to thee her tresses lends."—D.

But there is a good deal to be said on the other side.

* She sought, it would seem, to change the dark tresses which nature had given her into the blond locks which southern nations so admire, injured them in the effort, and had to replace them by purchase. The vagaries of fashion continually repeat themselves.

The testimony of Sidonius Apollinaris, after an interval of nearly five centuries, is worth very little. We have no hint of any contemporary authorities on which he founded it; and tradition, when it has to pass through so many generations—generations, too, that suffered so much disturbance and change—stands for next to nothing. If some passages, again, favour the notion that Corinna was Julia, there are others which tell against it. Ovid could never have ventured to use—would not even have dreamt of expressing in words—to Agrippa or Tiberius, the insolent threats which he vents against the husband of Corinna. Nor is it possible to imagine that Julia, however profligate, could ever have been even tempted to the avarice with which Ovid reproaches his mistress, when he remonstrates against the preference that she had shown for some wealthy soldier just returned from the wars. Then, again, the poems were read in public;—an absolutely impossible audacity, if there had been the faintest suspicion that they referred to so exalted a personage as the emperor's daughter. The writer of the verse himself tells us that it was not known who was the theme of his song, and he speaks of some woman who was going about boasting that *she* was Ovid's Corinna.

Of the subject-matter of 'The Loves' there is little to be said. The passion which inspires the verse is coarser and more brutal than that of his rival poets, even when this shows itself in its worst phases. It has nothing of the fervour of Propertius, the tenderness of Tibullus. It does not spring from any depth of feeling It is real, but its reality is of the basest, most literal sort. That

he describes an actual amour is only too manifest, but that this was in any true sense of the words "an affair of the heart" may well be doubted. But then, again, he shows an incomparable skill in expression; he invests even the lowest things with a certain grace. His wit and fancy "sparkle on the stye." If he lets us get away for a moment from the mire—if, with the delicate fancy that never fails him, he tells us some legend that "boys and virgins" need not blush to read —he is charming. There never was a more subtle and ingenious master of language, and it is a grievous pity that he should so often have used it so ill. Our specimen of his 'Loves' must be taken from the episodes rather than from the ordinary course of the poems. The following, however, will not offend. The poet renounces the vain struggle which he has been waging against love:—

"I yield, great Love! my former crimes forgive,
Forget my rebel thoughts, and let me live:
No need of force: I willingly obey,
And now, unarmed, shall prove no glorious prey.
So take thy mother's doves, thy myrtle crown,
And for thy chariot Mars will lend his own;
There shalt thou sit in thy triumphal pride,
And whilst glad shouts resound on every side.
Thy gentle hands thy mother's doves shall guide.
And then, to make thy glorious pomp and state,
A train of sighing youths and maids shall wait,
Yet none complain of an unhappy fate.
Then Modesty, with veils thrown o'er her face,
Now doubly blushing at her own disgrace;
Then sober thoughts, and whatsoe'er disdains
Love's power, shall feel his power, and wear his chains.

Then all shall fear, all bow, yet all rejoice—
'Io triumphe!' is the public voice.
Thy constant guards, soft fancy, hope, and fear,
Anger, and soft caresses shall be there:
By these strong guards are gods and men o'erthrown,
These conquer for thee, Love, and these alone:
Thy mother, from the sky, thy pomp shall grace,
And scatter sweetest roses in thy face.
Then glorious Love shall ride, profusely dressed
With all the richest jewels of the East,
Rich gems thy quiver, and thy wheels infold,
And hide the poorness of the baser gold."—D.

In the following the poet claims a purity and fidelity for his affection with which it is impossible to credit him:—

"Take, dear, a servant bound for ever; take
A heart whose troth no falsehood e'er shall break.
'Tis true but simple knightly birth is mine;
I claim no splendid names to grace my line;
My fields no countless tribe of oxen ploughs,
And scant the means a frugal home allows.
Now Phœbus aid me, and the Muses nine—
Bacchus, and Love, sweet Lord, who makes me thine,
Faith unsurpassed, and life exempt from blame,
And simple Modesty, and blushing Shame;
No trifler I; my heart no rivals share:
Thee will I make, be sure, my lifelong care;
With thee will spend what years the Fates shall give,
And when thou first shalt suffer, cease to live."

Another little poem has been elegantly paraphrased and adapted to modern manners by Mr A. A. Brodribb.*

* Lays from Latin Lyrics. By F. W. Hummel and A. A. Brodribb. Longmans: 1876.

It will remind the reader of a pretty passage in Mr Tennyson's "Miller's Daughter:"—

THE RING.

"Sign of my too presumptuous flame,
To fairest Celia haste, nor linger,
And may she gladly breathe my name,
And gaily put thee on her finger!

Suit her as I myself, that she
May fondle thee with murmured blessing;
Caressed by Celia! Who could be
Unenvious of such sweet caressing?

Had I Medea's magic art,
Or Proteus' power of transformation,
Then would I blithely play thy part,
The happiest trinket in creation!

Oh! on her bosom I would fall,
Her finger guiding all too lightly;
Or else be magically small,
Fearing to be discarded nightly.

And I her ruby lips would kiss
(What mortal's fortune could be better?)
As oft allowed to seal my bliss
As she desires to seal a letter.

Now go, these are delusions bright
Of idle Fancy's idlest scheming;
Tell her to read the token right—
Tell her how sweet is true love's dreaming."

But the chief ornaments of the book are two elegies,

properly so called,—one of a sportive, the other of a serious character. Catullus, a predecessor in the poetic art, of whom Ovid speaks with respect, had lamented, in an exquisite little poem which must always remain a model for such compositions, the death of the sparrow which Lesbia, his lady-love, "loved more than her own eyes." In a poem which, though not so graceful as that of the older writer, and scarcely even pretending to pathos, has many merits, Ovid commemorates the death of his own Corinna's parrot:—

"Our parrot, sent from India's farthest shore,
Our parrot, prince of mimics, is no more.
Throng to his burial, pious tribes of air,
With rigid claw your tender faces tear!
Your ruffled plumes, like mourners' tresses, rend,
And all your notes, like funeral trumpets, blend!
Mourn all that cleave the liquid skies, but chief
Beloved turtle, lead the general grief,
Through long harmonious days the parrot's friend,
In mutual faith still loyal to the end!
What boots that faith? those splendid hues and strange?
That voice so skilled its various notes to change?
What to have won my gentle lady's grace?
Thou diest, hapless glory of thy race.
Red joined with saffron in thy beak was seen,
And green thy wings beyond the emerald's sheen;
Nor ever lived on earth a wiser bird,
With lisping voice to answer all he heard.
'Twas envy slew thee; all averse to strife,
One love of chatter filled thy peaceful life:
For ever satisfied with scantiest fare,
Small time for food that busy tongue could spare.

Walnuts and sleep-producing poppies gave
Thy simple diet, and thy drink the wave.
Long lives the hovering vulture, long the kite
Pursues through air the circles of his flight;
Many the years the noisy jackdaws know,
Prophets of rainfall; and the boding crow
Waits, still unscathed by armed Minerva's hate,
Three ages three times told, a tardy fate.
But he, our prattler from earth's farthest shore,
Our human tongue's sweet image, is no more.
Thus still the ravening fates our best devour,
And spare the mean till life's extremest hour.
Why tell the prayers my lady prayed in vain,
Borne by the stormy south wind o'er the main?
The seventh dawn had come, the last for thee,
With empty distaff stood the fatal Three.
Yet still from failing throat thy accents rung,
Farewell, Corinna! cried thy dying tongue.
There stands a grove with dark-green ilex crowned
Beneath the Elysian hill, and all around
With turf undying shines the verdant ground.
There dwells, if true the tale, the pious race—
All evil birds are banished from the place;
There harmless swans unbounded pasture find;
There dwells the phœnix, single of his kind;
The peacock spreads his splendid plumes in air,
The kissing doves sit close, an amorous pair;
There in their woodland home a guest allowed,
Our parrot charms the pious listening crowd.
Beneath a mound, of justly measured size,
Small tombstone, briefest epitaph, he lies,
'His mistress' darling'—that this stone may show—
The prince of feathered speakers lies below."

The other elegy has for its subject the death of the poet Tibullus:—

"If bright Aurora mourned for Memnon's fate,
Or the fair Thetis wept Achilles slain,
And the sad sorrows that on mortals wait
Can ever move celestial hearts with pain—

Come, doleful Elegy! too just a name!
Unbind thy tresses fair, in loose attire,
For he, thy bard, the herald of thy fame,
Tibullus, burns on the funereal pyre.

Ah, lifeless corse! Lo! Venus' boy draws near
With upturned quiver and with shattered bow,
His torch extinguished, see him toward the bier
With drooping wings disconsolately go.

He smites his heaving breast with cruel blow,
Those straggling locks, his neck all streaming round,
Receive the tears that fastly trickling flow,
While sobs convulsive from his lips resound.

In guise like this, Iulus, when of yore
His dear Æneas died, he sorrowing went;
Now Venus wails as when the raging boar
The tender thigh of her Adonis rent.

We bards are named the gods' peculiar care;
Nay, some declare that poets are divine;
Yet forward death no holy thing can spare,
'Round all his dismal arms he dares entwine.

Did Orpheus' mother aid, or Linus' sire?
That one subdued fierce lions by his song
Availed not; and, they say, with plaintive lyre
The god mourned Linus, woods and glades among.

Mæonides, from whose perennial lay
Flow the rich fonts of the Pierian wave

To wet the lips of bards, one dismal day
Sent down to Orcus and the gloomy grave—

Him, too, Avernus holds in drear employ;
Only his songs escape the greedy pile;
His work remains—the mighty wars of Troy,
And the slow web, unwove by nightly guile.

Live a pure life;—yet death remains thy doom:
Be pious;—ere from sacred shrines you rise,
Death drags you heedless to the hollow tomb!
Confide in song—lo! there Tibullus lies.

Scarce of so great a soul, thus lowly laid,
Enough remains to fill this little urn;
O holy bard! were not the flames afraid
That hallowed corse thus ruthlessly to burn?

These might devour the heavenly halls that shine
With gold—they dare a villany so deep:
She turned who holds the Erycinian shrine,
And there are some who say she turned to weep.

Yet did the base soil of a stranger land
Not hold him nameless; as the spirit fled
His mother closed his eyes with gentle hand,
And paid the last sad tribute to the dead.

Here, with thy wretched mother's woe to wait,
Thy sister came with loose dishevelled hair;
Nemesis kisses thee, and thy earlier mate—
They watched the pyre when all had left it bare.

Departing, Delia faltered, 'Thou wert true,
The Fates were cheerful then, when I was thine:'
The other, 'Say, what hast thou here to do?'
Dying, he clasped his failing hand in mine.

Ah, yet, if any part of us remains
But name and shadow, Albius is not dead;
And thou, Catullus, in Elysian plains,
With Calvus see the ivy crown his head.

Thou, Gallus, prodigal of life and blood,
If false the charge of amity betrayed,
And aught remains across the Stygian flood,
Shalt meet him yonder with thy happy shade.

Refined Tibullus! thou art joined to those
Living in calm communion with the blest;
In peaceful urn thy quiet bones repose—
May earth lie lightly where thy ashes rest!"

Of the 'Art of Love' the less, perhaps, that is said the better. The poet himself warns respectable persons to have nothing to do with his pages, and the warning is amply justified by their contents. It has, however, some of the brilliant episodes which Ovid introduces with such effect. His own taste, and the taste, we may hope, of his readers, demanded that the base level of sensuality should sometimes be left for a higher flight of fancy. The description of Ariadne in Naxos is as brilliant as Titian's picture; equally vivid is the story of the flight of Dædalus and his son Icarus on the wings which the matchless craftsman had made, and of the fate which followed the over-daring flight of the youth through regions too near to the sun. Then, again, we find ever and anon pictures of Roman manners which may amuse without offence. Among such are Ovid's instructions to his fair readers how they may most becomingly take their part in the games of

chance and skill which were popular in the polite circles of Rome. Among these games he mentions the cubical dice, called *tesseræ*, resembling our own in shape, and similarly marked. Three of these were used together; and it was customary to throw them from cups of a conical shape. The luckiest throw was "treble sixes," and was honoured by the name of Aphrodite or Venus. The worst was "treble aces:" this was stigmatised as "the dog." There were other dice made out of the knuckle-bones of animals. They were called *tali*. (Our own popular name for them is "dibs.") These were used either in the same way as the cubical dice, though they were not numbered in the same way, or in a game of manual skill which still survives among us, where the player throws them and catches them again, or performs other feats of dexterity with them. Besides these there was the game of the "Robbers" (*Ludus Latrunculorum*), played with pieces made of glass or ivory, which has been compared with chess, but was probably not so complicated, and more nearly resembling our games of "Fox and Geese" and "Military Tactics." The game of the "Fifteen Lines" must have been very like our "Backgammon," as the moves of the men were determined by previous throws of dice. Ovid, after recommending his readers to practise a graceful playing at the games, wisely warns them that it is still more important that they should learn to keep their temper. The suitor he advises to allow his fair antagonist to win, a counsel doubtless often followed by those who have never had the advantage—or, we should

rather say, the disadvantage—of studying Ovid's precepts. Equally familiar will be the device of a present of fruit brought by a slave-boy in a rustic basket, which the lover will declare has been conveyed from a country garden, though he will probably have bought it in the neighbouring street. A certain sagacity must be allowed to the counsel that the lover, when his lady is sick, must not take upon himself the odious office of forbidding her a favourite dish; and will, if possible, hand over to a rival the office, equally odious, of administering a nauseous medicine. The recommendation not to be too particular in inquiring about age is equally sagacious. It is curious to observe that Lord Byron's expressed aversion to seeing women eat was not unknown to the Roman youth. Ovid, who, to do him justice, never praises wine, hints that drinking was not equally distasteful.

The 'Remedies of Love' may be dismissed with a still briefer notice. Like the 'Art of Love,' it is relieved by some beautiful digressions. When it keeps close to its subject, it is, to say the least, not edifying. The "Remedies," indeed, are for the most part as bad as the disease, though we must except that most respectable maxim that "idleness is the parent of love," with the poet's practical application of it. One specimen of these two books shall suffice. It is of the episodical kind, — a brilliant panegyric on the young Cæsar, Caius, son of Augustus's daughter Julia, who was then preparing to take the command of an expedition against the Parthians. Gross as is the flattery, it is perhaps less offensive than usual.

The young Caius died before his abilities could be proved; but the precocious genius of the family was a fact. Caius was then of the very same age at which his grandfather had first commanded an army.

"Once more our Prince prepares to make us glad,
And the remaining East to Rome will add.
Rejoice, ye Roman soldiers, in your urn;
Your ensigns from the Parthians shall return;
And the slain Crassi shall no longer mourn!
A youth is sent those trophies to demand,
And bears his father's thunder in his hand:
Doubt not th' imperial boy in wars unseen;
In childhood all of Cæsar's race are men.
Celestial seeds shoot out before their day,
Prevent their years, and brook no dull delay.
Thus infant Hercules the snakes did press,
And in his cradle did his sire confess.
Bacchus, a boy, yet like a hero fought,
And early spoils from conquered India brought.
Thus you your father's troops shall lead to fight,
And thus shall vanquish in your father's sight.
These rudiments you to your lineage owe;
Born to increase your titles as you grow.
Brethren you lead, avenge your brethren slain;
You have a father, and his right maintain.
Armed by your country's parent and your own,
Redeem your country and restore his throne."—D.

The date of the poem is fixed by this passage for the year B.C. 1, as that of the 'Remedies of Love' is settled for A.D. 1 by an allusion to the actual war in Parthia, which was at its height in that year, and was finished by a peace in the year following.

CHAPTER III.

DOMESTIC LIFE—BANISHMENT.

About Ovid's private life between his twentieth and fiftieth years there is little to be recorded. Two marriages have already been spoken of. He had probably reached middle life when he married for the third time. The probability, indeed, consists in the difficulty we have in believing that the husband of a wife whom he really respected and loved should have published so disreputable a book as the 'Art of Love,' for even to the lax judgment of Roman society it seemed disreputable. A feeling, perhaps a hint from high quarters, that he had gone too far—a consciousness, we may hope, that he was capable of better things—had made him turn to work of a more elevated kind. A good marriage may have been part of his plan for restoring himself to a reputable place in society. It is even possible to imagine that a genuine and worthy affection may have been one of the causes that operated in bringing about a change. A much earlier date, indeed, must be fixed, if we suppose that the daughter of whom Ovid speaks in the brief sketch of his life was a child of this marriage. This daughter

had been twice married at the time of his banishment, when he was in his fifty-second year, and had borne a child to each husband. Roman women married early, and changed their husbands quickly; but, in any case, it is not likely that the young lady could have been less than twenty. It seems, however, more probable that she was the offspring of the second marriage. In the many affectionate letters which Ovid addressed to his wife after his banishment, no mention is made of a child and grandchildren in whom both had a common interest. It is impossible to suppose that a husband who anxiously appeals to every motive in a wife which could help to keep their mutual affection unimpaired by absence, should have neglected to make use of what was obviously the most powerful of all. There is, it is true, a letter addressed to one Perilla, written by Ovid in exile. Dr Dyer, the learned author of the article "Ovidius" in the 'Dictionary of Biography and Mythology,' takes it for granted that this Perilla was Ovid's daughter by his third wife. The letter does not bear out the supposition. It will be found described in its place. Meanwhile it is sufficient to say, that while the writer enlarges on the fact that he had instructed Perilla in the art of poetry, he does not say a word which indicates a closer relationship than that of master and pupil. Had the poetess been his daughter, we may say with confidence that Ovid would have expressed in at least a dozen ways that he was the source at once of her life and of her song. The poet's wife was a lady of good position at Rome. In early years she had been what may be

called a lady-in-waiting to the aunt of Augustus, and at the same time an intimate friend of Marcia, a lady belonging to that branch of the Marcian house which bore the surname of Philippus. On Marcia's marriage with Fabius Maximus, representative of the great patrician family of the Fabii, one of the few ancient houses which had survived to the days of the empire, this friend accompanied her to her new home. From there Ovid married her. The union lasted till his death, with much mutual affection. When it has been added that Ovid's town mansion was close to the Capitol, and that he had a suburban residence, where he amused himself with the pleasures of gardening, nothing remains to be told about this portion of his life.

Some time after his third marriage, and not long before the great catastrophe which we are about to relate, Ovid's father died. He had completed his ninetieth year. His mother died shortly afterwards.

> "Ah! happy they and timely passed away
> Ere on their offspring came that fatal day!
> Ah! happy I amidst my grief to know
> That they are all unconscious of my woe!"

It is the catastrophe which he here mentions that has now to be discussed. The cause of the banishment of Ovid, like the personality of the Man in the Iron Mask and the authorship of 'Junius,' is one of the unsolved problems of history. The facts absolutely known are very soon related. Ovid was in his fifty-second year. His fame as a poet was at its height.

Any scandal that may have arisen from some of his publications had gradually passed away. Suddenly there fell on him "a bolt from the blue." A rescript in the emperor's hand was delivered to him, ordering him to leave Rome within a certain time, and to repair to Tomi, a desolate settlement on the western shore of the Black Sea, near the very outskirts of the empire. No decree of the senate had been passed to authorise the infliction of the banishment. It was simply an act of arbitrary power on the part of the emperor. The cause alleged was the publication of works corrupting to public morals, and the 'Art of Love' was specified. The punishment was not of the severest kind. The place of exile, hateful as it was to the banished man, was at least preferable to that which many offenders had to endure—some desolate rock in the Ægean, where the victim was kept from starvation only by the charity of his friends. Ovid was also permitted to retain and enjoy his property.

That the cause alleged was not the actual cause of the banishment may be considered certain. It is sufficient to say that the guilty work had been published at least ten years before. The offence was such as to afford a pretext of the barest kind to an absolute ruler who felt the force of public opinion just enough to make him shrink from a wholly arbitrary act, but was not careful to make any complete justification. But it did not, we may be sure, wholly sway his mind. We know, indeed, that there was another cause. To such a cause Ovid frequently alludes. And it is in this lies the mystery of the event.

At the same time, we must not suppose that the alleged motive had not some real influence on the emperor's action. His own life had not been by any means free from reproach. Even if we discredit much of what that great scandalmonger, Suetonius, tells us about him, there remains enough to convict him of shameful disregard of morality. But he was now an old man. And he had had some of those tremendous lessons which teach even the most profligate, if the light of intelligence be not wholly quenched in them, that moral laws cannot be disregarded with impunity. Men in their own lives quite regardless of purity feel a genuine shock of disgust and horror when they find unchastity in the women of their own family. And Augustus had felt the unutterable shame of discovering that his own daughter was the most profligate woman in Rome. Nor was he, we may believe, without some genuine feeling of concern for the future of his country. The establishment of absolute power may have been a necessity for the State,—all writers seem to agree in saying so. It had certainly aggrandised himself. But he could not fail to perceive, and to perceive more and more clearly as he came nearer to the end of his long reign, that it was ruining the old Roman character, the traditionary virtues of his country. An aristocracy, whose vast wealth furnished them with all the means of procuring enjoyment, but who were shut out from anything like the career of public life, would inevitably become corrupt. Augustus was not a man who would deny himself in order to set a practical example to others; but he was a man cap-

able of doing everything, short of such self-denial, to stop the evil of which, both from public and private causes, he was so acutely conscious. He had recourse to severe legislation against immorality. The more he saw, as he must have seen, how ineffectual was this method of reforming society, the greater must have been his disgust with other agencies which he supposed to be at work. Ovid's poems may well have been a symptom rather than a cause of general immorality; but it was quite possible that Augustus, his own habits and tastes changed by advancing years, may have sincerely regarded them as the author of mischief, and deserving, accordingly, of the severest punishment.

To arrive, however, at the truth, we must examine closely another side of the emperor's life. His home was divided between two conflicting interests—the interest of his own descendants and the interest of the step-children whom his wife Livia had brought into his family. Livia, one of the ablest women of whom history speaks, had steadfastly set her heart on securing for her son Tiberius the succession to the throne. To gain this end she had to clear away from his path the rivals who might be found among the blood-relations of her husband. How far the course of events helped her in her undertaking, how far she assisted the course of events by her own arts, will never be known. The fate of Julia, the daughter of Augustus, has been already related. She had borne to her second husband Agrippa five children, three of them sons. The eldest son Caius has been mentioned before.* He

* Page 39.

was wounded, it was said by treachery, before the town of Artagera, in Armenia, and died, some months afterwards, at Limyra, on the south-western coast of Asia Minor, whither he had gone to recruit his health in a climate less inclement than that of Armenia. The second son Lucius had died eighteen months before at Marseilles. The third, Agrippa Postumus, was a youth whose irreclaimably savage temper bordered on insanity. He had been adopted by Augustus at the same time with Tiberius, but as his character revealed itself, the hopes that the emperor might once have entertained of finding a successor in a descendant of his own died away. Livia had no difficulty in persuading him that if Agrippa was not to sit on the throne, it would be better that he should be removed from its neighbourhood. Though guiltless of any crime, he was banished to Planasia, on the coast of Corsica, and the emperor obtained a decree from the senate which made this banishment life-long. But the contest was not yet decided. The family of Julia, whose beauty, wit, and varied accomplishments were not forgotten, was greatly popular at Rome ; whilst the ambition of Livia, who was strongly suspected of having hastened the death of the young Cæsars, and the craft and dissimulation of Tiberius, were objects of dread. It was under these circumstances that she discovered the younger Julia to be in her power. This unhappy woman had inherited the vicious propensities of her mother. One of many lovers was Decius Julius Silanus, member of a family which had been distinguished in Rome since the second Punic war. The

intrigue was too notorious to escape observation, and Livia had the opportunity which she desired. Julia was banished; her paramour went into voluntary exile.

So far we are on firm historical ground. It may be added also, that the same year which saw the disgrace of Julia, witnessed also the banishment of Ovid. Were the two events in any way connected? We must get our answer from considering the circumstances of the political situation which has been described, from the coincidence, and from the hints, which are indeed sufficiently numerous, which Ovid himself gives us. The fact that these hints do occur negative one supposition which has found some favour—namely, that Ovid had become involuntarily acquainted with some dark secret disgraceful to the character of Augustus himself. Had there been such a secret, we can hardly suppose that the poet would have alluded to it. Again and again he makes his piteous supplications for the termination, or at least the mitigation, of his banishment. But every mention of such a fact would have been an additional offence. Indeed it is difficult to imagine that the possessor of such dangerous knowledge should have been suffered to live. Not a prolonged banishment with unlimited opportunities for communication with his friends, but the sword of the centurion, would have been his doom. We may be nearly sure that the secret, as far at least as it concerned Augustus, must have been known already. Ovid was not banished for the purpose of keeping something concealed. That purpose could have been far more easily and effec-

tually secured, and Roman emperors were not accustomed to be scrupulous about means. Let us see, then, what Ovid actually says on the subject:—

"Why did I see something? why did I make my eyes guilty? why did I become, all unknowingly, acquainted with guilt?"

"Two faults overthrew me—my verses and my wrong-doing; but about the guilt of one of them I must keep silence." *

"I am not worth so much as to renew thy wound, O Cæsar; it is far too much that you should once have felt the pang."

"You [Augustus] avenged on me, as is right, a quarrel of your own."

"Because my eyes unknowingly beheld a crime, I am punished. To have had the power of sight—this is my sin."

He protests that his fault had been an error rather than a crime:—

"If mortal deeds never escape the knowledge of gods, you know that there was no guilt in my fault. So it is—you know it; it was my mistake that led me astray; my purpose was foolish, but not wicked."

"You would say that this fault which ruined me was not a crime, did you know how things followed one another in this great trouble. It was either cowardice or fault of judgment, but fault of judgment first of all, that damaged me."

"Had not my part of the guilt admitted excuse, banishment would have been a trifling punishment."

* Masson appropriately quotes the words used by Tiberius in allowing Silanus to return from exile: "I myself still feel against him as strongly as ever the quarrel of my father Augustus."

That he became acquainted with some crime which touched nearly the honour of Augustus; that he concealed it; that in some sense he made himself an accomplice in it; that this crime was not an isolated act, but a line of conduct pursued for some time; that Ovid was afraid or thought it better not to reveal his knowledge of it,—are, it seems, inferences that may fairly be drawn from the language which he uses. They harmonise with the supposition that Ovid became involuntarily acquainted with the intrigue of the younger Julia with Silanus,—that he helped to conceal it, possibly assisted in its being carried on. It is probable, at the same time, that he was one of the party which supported that side of the imperial house. It is not difficult to imagine that the result should have been such as we know to have happened. The emperor, for a second time, is struck to the heart by the discovery of the darkest profligacy in one very near to himself. In his capacity as ruler he is terrified by the corruption which his laws are powerless to stay. The poems which the severer moralists of his court had possibly criticised—and Livia really felt, while Tiberius at least affected, such severity—comes to his recollection, and he finds that the author has actually abetted the guilty intrigues of his granddaughter. Livia and Tiberius, anxious to get out of the way a partisan of opposite interests who might possibly be dangerous, encourage the impulse, and the poet is banished.

Another part of the story remains to be related. If the tale which Tacitus tells be true, all the art and persistency of Livia had not succeeded in wholly

alienating the affections of Augustus from his own descendants. Even up to the last months of the old man's life the interests of her son had to be jealously defended. Tacitus gives (Annals, i. 5), without saying whether he himself believed or disbelieved it, a report which was current shortly after the death of Augustus. "A rumour had gone abroad that a few months before, he [Augustus] had sailed to Planasia on a visit to Agrippa, with the knowledge of some chosen friends, and with one companion, Fabius Maximus; that many tears were shed on both sides, with expressions of affection, and that thus there was a hope of the young man being restored to the home of his grandfather. This, it was said, Maximus had divulged to his wife Marcia, she again to Livia. All was known to Cæsar; and when Maximus soon afterwards died, by a death some thought to be self-inflicted, there were heard at his funeral wailings from Marcia, in which she reproached herself for having been the cause of her husband's destruction." *

To this Maximus Ovid addresses six of his 'Letters from the Pontus.' He evidently looked to him as one who might exercise a powerful influence on his behalf. He appeals to him again and again to exer-

* Plutarch has added to this narrative an interesting anecdote to the effect that Fabius (he calls him Fulvius by mistake), when paying his respects as usual to the emperor in the morning, had his salutation returned with the ominous "Farewell, Fulvius." "But he, comprehend ng the matter, forthwith retired to his house, and, summoning his wife, said, 'Cæsar has learnt that I have not been silent about his secrets · I have therefore resolved to die.'"

cise it. And at one time he seems to have hoped that it would not be exercised in vain. "Augustus had begun," he writes in the sixth year of his exile, "to grow more lenient to my fault of ignorance, and lo! he leaves my hopes and all the world desolate at once." It is in the same letter that he significantly deplores the death of Maximus. "I think, Maximus, that I must have been the cause of your death." This may have been a commonplace,—the fear lest the cause of so unlucky a man might be fatal to any who undertook it. Viewed in connection with the whole story, it assumes a different aspect. That Maximus had perished in an attempt to befriend Ovid may have been so far true that his death followed an unsuccessful effort to restore to the favour of Augustus and to the succession the family in whose fall the poet himself had fallen.

CHAPTER IV.

THE METAMORPHOSES OR TRANSFORMATIONS.

Ovid tells us that before he was banished he had written, but not corrected, the fifteen books of the 'Metamorphoses,' and had also composed twelve books (only six have been preserved) of the 'Fasti' or Roman Calendar. These are his chief surviving poems, and it will be convenient to describe them in this and the following chapter.

In the 'Metamorphoses' we have the largest and most important of Ovid's works; and, if we view it as a whole, the greatest monument of his poetical genius. The plan of the book is to collect together, out of the vast mass of Greek mythology and legend, the various stories which turn on the change of men and women from the human form into animals, plants, or inanimate objects. Nor are the tales merely collected. Such a collection would have been inevitably monotonous and tiresome. With consummate skill the poet arranges and connects them together. The thread of connection is often indeed slight; sometimes it is broken altogether. But it is sufficiently continuous to keep alive the reader's interest; which

is, indeed, often excited by the remarkable ingenuity of the transition from one tale to another. But it did not escape the author's perception, that to repeat over and over again the story of a marvel which must have been as incredible to his own contemporaries as it is to us, would have been to insure failure. Hence the metamorphoses themselves occupy but a small part of the book, which finds its real charm and beauty in the brilliant episodes, for the introduction of which they supply the occasion.

How far the idea was Ovid's own it is impossible to say. Two Greek poets are known to have written on the same subject. One of them was Nicander, of Colophon, in Asia Minor, an author of the second century B.C., attached, it would seem, to the court of Pergamus, which, under the dynasty of the Attali, was a famous centre of literary activity. Of his work, the 'Changes' (for so we may translate its Greek title), only a few fragments are preserved, quite insufficient to give us any idea of its merits or methods. Parthenius, a native of the Bithynian Nicæa, so famous in ecclesiastical history, may be credited with having given some hints to the Roman poet, — to whom, indeed, as a contemporary,* and connected with the great literary circle of Rome, he was probably known. Parthenius, we know on good authority, taught the Greek language to Virgil, who condescended to borrow at least one line from his preceptor. His 'Metamorphoses' have entirely perished.

* Parthenius died at an advanced age, about the beginning of the reign of Tiberius.

We have only the probability of the case to warrant us in supposing that Ovid was under obligations to him. Of these obligations, indeed, no ancient authority speaks; and it is safe, probably, to conjecture that they were inconsiderable — nothing, certainly, like what Virgil owed to Homer, Hesiod, and Theocritus.

It would weary the reader, not to mention the space which the execution of such a task would require, to conduct him along the whole course of the metamorphoses — from the description of Chaos, with which the poet begins, to the transformation of the murdered Cæsar into a comet, with which, not following the customary adulation to the successor of the great Dictator, he concludes. Specimens must suffice; and the book is one which, better than any other great poem that can be mentioned, specimens may adequately represent.

The first book begins, as has been said, with a description of Chaos. "Nothing," says Bayle, in his satirical fashion, "could be clearer and more intelligible than this description, if we consider only the poetical phrases; but if we examine its philosophy, we find it confused and contradictory — a chaos, in fact, more hideous than that which he has described." Bayle, however, looked for what the poet never pretended to give. His cosmogony is, at least, as intelligible as any other; and it is expressed with marvellous force of language, culminating in one of the noblest of the poet's efforts, the description of the creation of man, the crown and masterpiece of the newly-made world.

"Something yet lacked—some holier being—dowered
With lofty soul, and capable of rule
And governance o'er all besides,—and Man
At last had birth :—whether from seed divine
Of Him, the artificer of things, and cause
Of the amended world,—or whether Earth
Yet new, and late from Æther separate, still
Retained some lingering germs of kindred Heaven,
Which wise Prometheus, with the plastic aid
Of water borrowed from the neighbouring stream,
Formed in the likeness of the all-ordering Gods ;
And, while all other creatures sought the ground
With downward aspect grovelling, gave to man
His port sublime, and bade him scan, erect,
The heavens, and front with upward gaze the stars.
And thus earth's substance, rude and shapeless erst,
Transmuted took the novel form of Man." *

The four ages of the world thus created are described ; and to the horrors of the last of these, the Age of Iron, succeeds the tale of its crowning wickedness—the attempt of the giants to scale the heights of heaven. Jupiter smites down the assailants, and the earth brings forth from their blood

"A race, of Gods
Contemptuous, prone to violence and lust
Of strife, and bloody-minded, born from blood."

Jupiter calls his fellow-gods to council, and they pass to his hall along the way—

"Sublime of milky whiteness, whence its name."

* Two lines of Dryden's version are here worth quoting :—

"Man looks aloft, and with erected eyes
Beholds his own hereditary skies."

He inveighs against the enormities of man, recounting what he had himself witnessed when he had—

> "Putting off the God,
> Disguised in human semblance walked the world."

Many shameful sights he had witnessed, but the worst horror had met him in the hall of Lycaon, the Arcadian king, who, after attempting to murder his guest, had served up to him a feast of human flesh. Lycaon, indeed, had paid the penalty of his crime:—

> "Terror-struck he fled,
> And through the silence of the distant plains
> Wild howling, vainly strove for human voice.
> His maddened soul his form infects:—his arms
> To legs are changed, his robes to shaggy hide;—
> Glutting on helpless flocks his ancient lust
> Of blood, a wolf he prowls,—retaining still
> Some traces of his earlier self,—the same
> Grey fell of hair—the red fierce glare of eye
> And savage mouth,—alike in beast and man!"

But a wider vengeance was needed. The whole race of man must be swept away. Thus we come to a description of the deluge. Of all mankind, two only are left,—Deucalion, son of Prometheus, and Pyrrha, daughter of the brother Titan Epimetheus—

> "Than he no better, juster man had lived;
> Than she no woman holier."

Seeking to know how the earth may be replenished with the race of man, they receive the mysterious command—

> "Behind you fling your mighty Mother's bones!"

Deucalion, as becomes the son of so sagacious a father, discovers its meaning. The "mighty mother" is earth, the stones are her bones.

"They descend
The mount, and, with veiled head and vest ungirt,
Behind them, as commanded, fling the stones.
And lo!—a tale past credence, did not all
Antiquity attest it true,—the stones
Their natural rigour lose, by slow degrees
Softening and softening into form; and grow,
And swell with milder nature, and assume
Rude semblance of a human shape, not yet
Distinct, but like some statue new-conceived
And half expressed in marble. What they had
Of moist or earthy in their substance, turns
To flesh:—what solid and inflexible
Forms into bones:—their veins as veins remain:—
Till, in brief time, and by the Immortals' grace,
The man-tossed pebbles live and stand up men,
And women from the woman's cast revive.
So sprang our hard enduring race, which speaks
Its origin—fit fruit of such a stock."

But while man was thus created—

"All other life in various shapes the Earth
Spontaneous bare, soon as the Sun had kissed
Her bosom yet undried, and mud and marsh
Stirred with ferment."

Among these creatures, equivalents of the monstrous saurians of modern geological science, springs

"Huge Python, serpent-prodigy, the dread
Of the new world, o'er half the mountain's side
Enormous coiled. But him the Archer-God,
With all his quiver's store of shafts, untried

Till now on aught save deer or nimble goat,
Smote to the death, and from a thousand wounds
Drained the black torrent of his poisonous gore :—
And, that the memory of the deed might live
Through after-time, his famous festival
And Pythian contest, from the monster's name
So called, ordained."

Flushed with his victory over the monster, Apollo meets Cupid, and asks him what right he has to such a manly weapon as the bow. Cupid retaliates by a shaft which sets the Sun-God's heart on fire with a passion for Daphne, daughter of Peneus, fairest and chastest of nymphs. She flies from his pursuit, and, when flight is ineffectual, is changed at her own prayer into a laurel. The god makes the best of his defeat :—

"'And if,' he cries,
'Thou canst not now my consort be, at least
My tree thou *shalt* be ! Still thy leaves shall crown
My locks, my lyre, my quiver. Thine the brows
Of Latium's lords to wreathe, what time the voice
Of Rome salutes the triumph, and the pomp
Of long procession scales the Capitol.
Before the gates Augustan shalt thou stand
Their hallowed guardian, high amid thy boughs
Bearing the crown to civic merit due :—
And, as my front with locks that know no steel
Is ever youthful, ever be thine own
Thus verdant, with the changing year unchanged !'"

The news of the strange event spreads far and wide, and to Peneus

"Throng
The brother-Powers of all the neighbour-floods,

Doubtful or to congratulate or condole
The parent's hap."

One only was absent, Inachus,

"Whom grief
Held absent, in his cave's recess, with tears
His flood augmenting."

(One of the frigid conceits with which Ovid often betrays a faulty taste.) His grief was for his daughter Io, whom he has lost, changed by Juno into a heifer. The feelings of the transformed maiden are told with some pathos.

"By the loved banks she strays
Of Inachus, her childhood's happy haunt,
And in the stream strange horns reflected views,
Back-shuddering at the sight. The Naiads see
And know her not:—nor Inachus himself
Can recognise his child,—though close her sire
She follows—close her sister-band,—and courts
Their praise, and joys to feel their fondling hands.
Some gathered herbs her father proffers—mute,
She licks and wets with tears his honoured palm,
And longs for words to ask his aid, and tell
Her name, her sorrows."

She contrives to tell her tale in letters scraped by her hoof. Then Argus, the hundred-eyed herdsman, to whom Juno has committed her, drives her to other pastures. Then Mercury finds him, charms him to slumber with the song of Syrinx, transformed into a reed to escape the love of Pan, and then slays him.

"So waned at once
The light which filled so many eyes; one night
Closed all the hundred. But Saturnia's care
Later renewed their fires, and bade them shine,
Gem-like, amid the peacock's radiant plumes."

In Egypt, Io gives birth to her son Epaphus, and Epaphus, growing up, has among his companions one Phaëton,—

"Apollo's child, whom once, with boastful tongue,
Vaunting his birth divine, and claiming rank
Superior, the Inachian checked"

with the taunt that his divine parentage was all a fable. The furious youth seeks his mother, and demands whether the story is true. It is, she says; and she bids him seek the Sun-God himself, and hear the truth from his lips. The famous description of the Sun-God's palace follows :—

"Sublime on lofty columns, bright with gold
And fiery carbuncle, its roof inlaid
With ivory, rose the Palace of the Sun,
Approached by folding gates with silver sheen
Radiant; material priceless,—yet less prized
For its own worth than what the cunning head
Of Mulciber thereon had wrought,—the globe
Of Earth,—the Seas that wash it round,—the Skies
That overhang it. 'Mid the waters played
Their Gods cærulean. Triton with his horn
Was there, and Proteus of the shifting shape,
And old Ægeon, curbing with firm hand
The monsters of the deep. Her Nereids there
Round Doris sported, seeming, some to swim,
Some on the rocks their tresses green to dry,

Some dolphin-borne to ride ; nor all in face
The same, nor different ;—so should sisters be.
Earth showed her men, and towns, and woods, and beasts,
And streams, and nymphs, and rural deities :
And over all the mimic Heaven was bright
With the twelve Zodiac signs, on either valve
Of the great portal figured,—six on each."

Phaëton begs his father to confirm his word by granting any boon that he may ask ; and, the god consenting, asks that he may drive his chariot for a day. Phaëton is the stock example of "fiery ambition o'ervaulting itself;" and the story of his fall may be passed over, though it abounds with passages of splendid description. Eridanus or Po receives the fallen charioteer. His weeping sisters are transformed into poplars on its banks.

"But yet they weep :—and, in the Sun, their tears
To amber harden, by the clear stream caught
And borne, the gaud and grace of Latian maids."

We have reached the middle of the second out of fifteen books. We will try their quality at another place.

Perseus, son of Jupiter, is on his travels, mounted on the winged steed Pegasus, and armed with the head of the Gorgon Medusa. He comes to the house of Atlas, "hugest of the human race"—

"To whom the bounds
Of Earth and Sea were subject, where the Sun
Downward to Ocean guides his panting steeds
And in the waves his glowing axle cools."

He asks shelter and hospitality ; but the Titan, mindful of how Theseus had told him how a son of Jupiter should one day rob him of his orchard's golden fruit, refuses the boon. The indignant hero cries—

"'Then take
From me this gift at parting !' and his look
Askance he turned, and from his left arm flashed
Full upon Atlas' face the Gorgon-Head,
With all its horrors :—and the Giant-King
A Giant mountain stood ! His beard, his hair
Were forests :—into crags his shoulders spread
And arms :—his head the crowning summit towered :—
His bones were granite. So the Fates fulfilled
Their hest ;—and all his huge proportions swelled
To vaster bulk, and ample to support
The incumbent weight of Heaven and all its Stars."

Perseus pursues his journey, and reaches the Lybian shore, where the beautiful Andromeda is chained to a rock, to expiate by becoming the sea-monster's prey her mother's foolish boast of beauty.

"Bound by her white arms to the rugged rocks
The Maid he saw :—and were't not for the breeze
That gave her tresses motion, and the tears
That trickled down her pallid cheeks,—had sure
Some marble statue deemed."

The reader may like to see how a modern poet has treated the same subject. It is Perseus who speaks :—

"From afar, unknowing, I marked thee,
Shining, a snow-white cross on the dark-green walls of the sea-cliff ;
Carven in marble I deemed thee, a perfect work of the craftsman,

Likeness of Amphitrite, or far-famed Queen Cytherea.
Curious I came, till I saw how thy tresses streamed in the sea-wind,
Glistening, black as the night, and thy lips moved slow in thy wailing."

Mr Kingsley's hero delivers the maiden, trusting to her for his reward. Ovid's Perseus, less chivalrous, perhaps, but more in accordance with ancient modes of thought, bargains with her father and mother that he shall have her for his wife, before he begins the conflict with the destroyer. On the other hand, it may be placed to his credit that he slays the beast with his falchion, without recourse to the terrible power of the Gorgon head. Ovid's taste seems a little in fault in the next passage. Perseus wraps up his dangerous weapon in sea-weed, which freezes, and stiffens at its touch into stony leaf and stalk. The sea-nymphs, in delight, repeat the experiment, sow "the novel seeds" about their realm, and so produce the coral. To us it seems a puerile conceit, diminishing the beauty of a noble legend. Ovid, probably, thought only of completing his work, by introducing every fable of transformation he could find.

After victory comes due sacrifice to the gods, and then Cepheus makes the marriage-feast for his daughter. To the assembled guests Perseus tells the story of how he had won the Gorgon's head. In the midst of their talk comes a sudden interruption of no friendly kind. Phineus, brother of Cepheus, bursts with an armed throng into the hall, and demands Andromeda, who had been promised to him in marriage. A fierce bat-

tle ensues; and Ovid, in describing it, seems to challenge comparison with the great masters of epic. The young hero, true to his principles, defends himself with mortal weapons, and works prodigies of valour. It is only when he finds his friends crushed by overpowering numbers that he bares the dreadful Head, and turns it on the assailants;—first as they press forward one by one, then on the crowd, and last on the leader himself.

"He flashed
Full on the cowering wretch the Gorgon-Head.
Vainly he strove to shun it! Into stone
The writhing neck was stiffened:—white the eyes
Froze in their sockets:—and the statue still,
With hands beseeching spread, and guilty fear
Writ in its face, for mercy seemed to pray."

Perseus then bore his bride to Argos, where the Head recovers from the usurping Prœtus his grandfather's kingdom, and turns to stone the incredulous Polydectes, tyrant of Seriphus.

Here we leave Perseus; and Pallas, who has been his helper throughout his toils, goes to Helicon, there to inquire of the Muses about the strange fountain which she hears has sprung from the hoof-dint of the winged Pegasus. Urania, speaking for the sisterhood, tells her that the tale is true; and when the goddess speaks of the beauty and peace of their retreat, narrates the story of how they had escaped from the tyrant Pyreneus by help of their wings, and how he, seeking to follow them, had been dashed in pieces. As she speaks, a

"Whirr of wings
Came rustling overhead, and from the boughs

Voices that bade them 'Hail!'—so human-clear
That upward Pallas turned her wondering gaze
To see who spoke. She saw but Birds:—a row
Thrice three, of Pies, at imitative sounds
Deftest of wingèd things, that, on a branch
Perched clamorous, seemed as though some woeful fate
They wailed and strove to tell."

Urania explains the marvel. They had been nine sisters, daughters of Pierus, "Lord of Pella's field," and proud of their skill in music and song; and, deeming that there lay some magic in their mystic number, had challenged the sister Muses to contend. The challenge had been accepted, and the Nymphs swore by all their river-gods to judge fairly between the two. One of the daughters of Pierus had sung, and her song had been treason to the gods, for it told how, in fear of the Titan onset of the sons of earth, the lords of heaven had fled, disguised in all strange shapes. Then the Muses had replied; but Pallas thinks Urania will not care to hear their song. Not so, replies the goddess; so the tale is told. Calliope had been their chosen champion, and her theme had been how Pluto had carried off Proserpina, daughter of Ceres, to share his gloomy throne in Hades, and how the mourning mother sought her child in every region of the earth. A touch of the ludicrous comes in, the fate of the mocking Stellio:—

"Weary and travel-worn,—her lips unwet
With water,—at a straw-thatched cottage door
The Wanderer knocked. An ancient crone came forth
And saw her need, and hospitable brought

Her bowl of barley-broth, and bade her drink.
Thankful she raised it :—but a graceless boy
And impudent stood by, and, ere the half
Was drained, 'Ha! ha! see how the glutton swills!'
With insolent jeer he cried. The Goddess' ire
Was roused, and, as he spoke, what liquor yet
The bowl retained full in his face she dashed.
His cheeks broke out in blotches :—what were arms
Turned legs, and from the shortened trunk a tail
Tapered behind. Small mischief evermore
Might that small body work :—the lizard's self
Was larger now than he. With terror shrieked
The crone, and weeping stooped her altered child
To raise ;—the little monster fled her grasp
And wriggled into hiding. Still his name
His nature tells, and, from the star-like spots
That mark him, known as Stellio crawls the Newt."

At last, after a fruitless quest, she wanders back to Sicily, the land where the lost one had last been seen. And then the secret is half revealed. Cyane, chief of Sicilian nymphs, had tried to bar the passage of Pluto as he was descending with his captive, and had been dissolved into water by the wrath of the god. But she tells what she can, and shows, floating on her waves, the zone which Proserpina had dropped. Then the mother knew her loss, and in her wrath banned with barrenness the ungrateful earth. But who was the robber? That she finds another nymph to tell her. Arethusa had seen her :—

"All the depths
Of earth I traverse :—where her caverns lie
Darkest and nethermost I pass, and here
Uprising, look once more upon the Stars.

And in my course I saw her! yea, these eyes,
As past the Stygian realm my waters rolled,
Proserpina beheld! Still sad she seemed,
And still her cheek some trace of terror wore,
But all a Queen, and, in that dismal world,
Greatest in place and majesty,—the wife
Of that tremendous God who rules in Hell."

The wretched mother flies to the throne of Jupiter. She must have back her child. She does not take account of the great throne which she shares. And Jove grants the request, but only—for so the Fates have willed it—on this condition, that no food should have passed her lips in the realms below. Alas! the condition cannot be fulfilled. She had plucked a pomegranate in the garden of the Shades, and had eaten seven of its grains. Ascalaphus, son of the gloomy deities Woe and Darkness, had seen her, and he told the tale. The mother takes her revenge:—

"With water snatched from Phlegethon
His brow she sprinkled. Instant, beak and plumes
And larger eyes were his, and tawny wings
His altered form uplifted, and his head
Swelled disproportioned to his size: his nails
Curved crooked into claws,—and heavily
His pinions beat the air. A bird accursed,
Augur of coming sorrow, still to Man
Ill-ominous and hateful flits the Owl."

But Jove reconciles her to her grim son-in-law. Proserpina was to spend six months in hell and six on earth, and the satisfied mother has leisure to seek Arethusa, and find how she had learned the secret.

She hears in reply how she had fled from the pursuit of Alpheus from her native home in Achaia, and had passed through all the depths of earth till she rose again to the light in Sicily. The story told, Ceres hastens to Athens, and there teaches the youth Triptolemus the secrets of husbandry, and bids him journey in her dragon-car over the world to spread the new knowledge. At the court of the Scythian Lyncus he is treacherously assailed by his host, but Ceres stays the murderer's hand, and changes him into a lynx. Here, after digressions which strongly remind us of the 'Arabian Nights,' we come to the end of Calliope's song. Then Urania tells how the Nymphs, with one voice, accorded victory to the Muses; and how the Pierian sisters—whose name, by the way, their successful rivals seem to have appropriated — rebelled against the judgment, and found the penalty in transformation into Pies. The story then passes on to the revenge which Pallas herself has had on a mortal rival. The poet—with true tact,—does not make her tell the tale herself, for she seems to have conquered by power, not by skill. Arachne, a Lydian maid, brought all the world to look at her wondrous spinning. They swear that Pallas herself had taught her, but she disdains such praise;—her art was all her own. Let Pallas come to compare her skill. And Pallas came, but at first in shape of an ancient dame, who counsels the bold maiden to be content with victory over mortal competitors, but to avoid dangerous challenge to the gods. The advice is given in vain. Arachne rushes upon her fate. The goddess

reveals herself, and the contest is begun. An admirable piece of word-painting follows :—

"The looms were set,—the webs
Were hung: beneath their fingers nimbly plied
The subtle fabrics grew, and warp and woof,
Transverse, with shuttle and with slay compact
Were pressed in order fair. And either girt
Her mantle close, and eager wrought; the toil
Itself was pleasure to the skilful hands
That knew so well their task. With Tyrian hue
Of purple blushed the texture, and all shades
Of colour, blending imperceptibly
Each into each. So, when the wondrous bow—
What time some passing shower hath dashed the sun—
Spans with its mighty arch the vault of Heaven,
A thousand colours deck it, different all,
Yet all so subtly interfused that each
Seems one with that which joins it, and the eye
But by the contrast of the extremes perceives
The intermediate change.—And last, with thread
Of gold embroidery pictured, on the web
Lifelike expressed, some antique fable glowed."

Pallas pictures the Hill of Mars at Athens, where the gods had sat in judgment in the strife between herself and Neptune as to who should be the patron deity of that fair city.

"There stood the God
Of Seas, and with his trident seemed to smite
The rugged rock, and from the cleft out-sprang
The Steed that for its author claimed the town.
Herself, with shield and spear of keenest barb
And helm, she painted;—on her bosom gleamed
The Ægis:—with her lance's point she struck

The earth, and from its breast the Olive bloomed,
Pale, with its berried fruit:—and all the gods
Admiring gazed, adjudging in that strife
The victory hers."

Arachne, disloyal, as the daughters of Pierus had been, to the Lords of Heaven, pictures them in the base disguises to which love for mortal women had driven them. But her work is so perfect that—

"Not Pallas, nay, not Envy's self, could fault
In all the work detect."

The furious goddess smites her rival twelve times on the forehead:—

"The high-souled Maid
Such insult not endured, and round her neck
Indignant twined the suicidal noose,
And so had died. But, as she hung, some ruth
Stirred in Minerva's breast:—the pendent form
She raised, and 'Live!' she said—'but hang thou still
For ever, wretch! and through all future time
Even to thy latest race bequeath thy doom!'
And, as she parted, sprinkled her with juice
Of aconite. With venom of that drug
Infected dropped her tresses,—nose and ear
Were lost;—her form to smallest bulk compressed
A head minutest crowned;—to slenderest legs
Jointed on either side her fingers changed:
Her body but a bag, whence still she draws
Her filmy threads, and, with her ancient art,
Weaves the fine meshes of her Spider's web."

Leaving the goddess in the enjoyment of this doubtful victory, the story passes on to the tale of Niobe.

What has been given occupies in the original a space about equivalent to a book and a half.

Sometimes Ovid gives us an opportunity of comparing him with a great master of his own art. A notable instance of the kind is the story of how Orpheus went down to the lower world in search of his lost Eurydice; how he won her by the charms of his song from the unpitying Gods of Death, and lost her again on the very borders of life.

"So sang he, and, accordant to his plaint,
As wailed the strings, the bloodless Ghosts were moved
To weeping. By the lips of Tantalus
Unheeded slipped the wave;—Ixion's wheel
Forgot to whirl;—the Vulture's bloody feast
Was stayed;—awhile the Belides forbore
Their leaky urns to dip;—and Sisyphus
Sate listening on his stone. Then first, they say,—
The iron cheeks of the Eumenides
Were wet with pity. Of the nether realm
Nor King nor Queen had heart to say him nay.
Forth from a host of new-descended Shades
Eurydice was called; and, halting yet
Slow with her recent wound she came—alive,
On one condition to her spouse restored,
That, till Avernus' vale is passed and earth
Regained, he look not backward, or the boon
Is null and forfeit. Through the silent realm
Upward against the steep and fronting hill
Dark with obscurest gloom, the way he led:
And now the upper air was all but won,
When, fearful lest the toil o'er-task her strength,
And yearning to behold the form he loved,
An instant back he looked,—and back the Shade
That instant fled! The arms that wildly strove

To clasp and stay her clasped but yielding air!
No word of plaint even in that second Death
Against her Lord she uttered,—how could Love
Too anxious be upbraided?—but one last
And sad 'Farewell!' scarce audible, she sighed,
And vanished to the Ghosts that late she left."

Here is Virgil, though he has not the advantage of being presented by so skilful a translator as Mr King:—

"Stirred by his song, from lowest depths of hell
Came the thin spectres of the sightless dead,
Crowding as crowd the birds among the leaves
Whom darkness or a storm of wintry rain
Drives from the mountains. Mothers came, and sires,
Great-hearted heroes, who had lived their lives,
And boys, and maidens never wed, and men
Whom in their prime, before their parents' eyes,
The funeral flames had eaten. All around
With border of black mud and hideous reed,
Cocytus, pool unlovely, hems them in,
And Styx imprisons with his nine-fold stream.
Nay, and his song the very home of death
Entranced and nethermost abyss of hell,
And those Dread Three whose tresses are entwined
With livid snakes; while Cerberus stood agape,
Nor moved the triple horror of his jaw;
And in charmed air Ixion's wheel was stayed.
And now with step retreating he had shunned
All peril; and the lost one, given back,
Was nearing the sweet breath of upper air,
Following behind—such terms the gods imposed—
When some wild frenzy seized the lover's heart
Unheeding, well, were pardon known in hell,
Well to be pardoned. Still he stood, and saw,
Ah me! forgetful, mastered all by love,

Saw, at the very border of the day,
His own Eurydice. O wasted toil!
O broken compact of the ruthless god!
Then through Avernus rolled the crash of doom,
And she—'What miserable madness this,
Ah! wretched that I am! which ruins me
And thee, my Orpheus? Lo! the cruel Fates
Call me again; sleep seals my swimming eyes;
Farewell! for boundless darkness wraps me round
And carries me away, still stretching forth
Dark hands to thee, who am no longer thine.'"

No reader will doubt with which poet the general superiority lies; yet it must be allowed that Ovid is strong in what may be called his own peculiar line. There is a noble tenderness and a genuine pathos in the parting of the two lovers, which is characteristic of the poet's genius.

One of the longest as well as the most striking episodes in the whole book is the contest between Ajax and Ulysses for the arms of the dead Achilles; and it has the additional interest of recalling the declamatory studies of the poet's youth. It is throughout a magnificent piece of rhetoric. The blunt energy of Ajax, and the craft and persuasiveness of Ulysses, are admirably given. The elder Seneca, in the passage already quoted, mentions that the poet was indebted for some of his materials and language to his teacher, Porcius Latro, one of whose declamations on "The Contest for the Arms" Seneca had either heard or read. One phrase is specified as having been borrowed from this source. It is the fiery challenge with which Ajax clenches his argument:—

"Enough of idle words! let hands, not tongues,
Show what we are! *Fling 'mid yon hostile ranks*
Our hero's armour:—bid us fetch it thence:—
And be it his who first shall bring it back!"

The piece is too long to be given (it fills more than half of the thirteenth book), and its effect would be lost in extracts. A few lines, however, from the beginning may be quoted; and indeed nothing throughout is more finely put. It may be as well to mention that the ships spoken of had been in imminent danger of destruction at the hand of Hector, and that Ajax had at least some claim to be called their preserver:—

"On high the chieftains sat: the common throng
Stood in dense ring around; then Ajax rose,
Lord of the seven-fold shield; and backward glanced,
Scowling, for anger mastered all his soul,
Where on Sigæum's shore the fleet was ranged,
And with stretched hand: 'Before the ships we plead
Our cause, great heaven! and Ulysses dares
Before the ships to match himself with me!'"—C.

It may be noticed, as a proof that Ovid went out of his way, in introducing this episode, to make use of material to which he attached a special value, that the narrative is not really connected with any transformation. Ajax, defeated by the act which gives the arms to his rival, falls upon his sword; and the turf, wet with his blood,

"Blossomed with the self-same flower
That erst had birth from Hyacinthus' wound,
And in its graven cup memorial bears
Of either fate,—the characters that shape
Apollo's wailing cry, and Ajax' name."

What these characters were we learn from the end of the story here alluded to, of how the beautiful Hyacinthus was killed by a quoit from the hand of Apollo, and how

> "The blood
> That with its dripping crimson dyed the turf
> Was blood no more: and sudden sprang to life
> A flower that wore the lily's shape, but not
> The lily's silver livery, purple-hued
> And brighter than all tinct of Tyrian shells:
> Nor with that boon of beauty satisfied,
> Upon the petals of its cup the God
> Stamped legible his sorrow's wailing cry,
> And 'Ai! Ai!' ever seems the flower to say."

Two more specimens must conclude this chapter. Pygmalion's statue changing into flesh and blood at the sculptor's passionate prayer is a subject after Ovid's own heart, and he treats it with consummate delicacy and skill:—

> "The Sculptor sought
> His home, and, bending o'er the couch that bore
> His Maiden's lifelike image, to her lips
> Fond pressed his own,—and lo! her lips seemed warm,
> And warmer, kissed again:—and now his hand
> Her bosom seeks, and dimpling to his touch
> The ivory seems to yield,—as in the Sun
> The waxen labour of Hymettus' bees,
> By plastic fingers wrought, to various shape
> And use by use is fashioned. Wonder-spelled,
> Scarce daring to believe his bliss, in dread
> Lest sense deluded mock him, on the form
> He loves again and yet again his hand
> Lays trembling touch, and to his touch a pulse

Within throbs answering palpable :—'twas flesh !
'Twas very Life !—Then forth in eloquent flood
His grateful heart its thanks to Venus poured !
The lips he kissed were living lips that felt
His passionate pressure ;—o'er the virgin cheeks
Stole deepening crimson ;—and the unclosing eyes
At once on Heaven and on their Lover looked ! "

The fifteenth or last book of the 'Metamorphoses' contains an eloquent exposition of the Pythagorean philosophy. Pythagoras, a Greek by birth, had made Italy, the southern coasts of which were indeed thickly studded with the colonies of his nation, the land of his adoption, and the traditions of his teaching and of his life had a special interest for the people to which had descended the greatness of all the races—Oscan, Etruscan, Greek—which had inhabited the beautiful peninsula. A legend, careless, as such legends commonly are, of chronology, made him the preceptor of Numa, the wise king to whom Rome owed so much of its worship and its law. The doctrine most commonly connected with his name was that of the metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls from one body to another, whether of man or of the lower animals, though it probably did not occupy a very prominent part in his philosophy. It was an old belief of the Aryan race, and it had a practical aspect which commended it to the Roman mind, always more inclined to ethical than to metaphysical speculations. Virgil, in that vision of the lower world which occupies the sixth book of his great epic, employs it—partly, indeed, as a poetical artifice for introducing his magnificent roll of Roman

worthies, but also in a more serious aspect, as suggesting the method of those purifying influences which were to educate the human soul for higher destinies. Ovid sees in it the philosophical explanation of the marvels which he has been relating, and, as it were, their vindication from the possible charge of being childish fables, vacant of any real meaning, and unworthy of a serious pen. The passage which follows refers to a practical rule in which we may see a natural inference from the philosophical dogma. If man is so closely allied to the lower animals—if their forms are made, equally with his, the receptacles of the one divine animating spirit—then there is a certain impiety in his slaughtering them to satisfy his wants. Strangely enough, the progress or revolution of human thought has brought science again to the doctrine of man's kindred with the animals, though it seems altogether averse to the merciful conclusion which Pythagoras drew from it.

"What had ye done, ye flocks, ye peaceful race
Created for Man's blessing, that provide
To slake his thirst your udder's nectarous draught,
That with your fleece wrap warm his shivering limbs,
And serve him better with your life than death?—
What fault was in the Ox, a creature mild
And harmless, docile, born with patient toil
To lighten half the labour of the fields?—
Ungrateful he, and little worth to reap
The crop he sowed, that, from the crooked share
Untraced, his ploughman slew, and to the axe
Condemned the neck that, worn beneath his yoke,
For many a spring his furrows traced, and home

With many a harvest dragged his Autumn-wain!
Nor this is all:—but Man must of his guilt
Make Heaven itself accomplice, and believe
The Gods with slaughter of their creatures pleased!
Lo! at the altar, fairest of his kind,—
And by that very fairness marked for doom,—
The guiltless victim stands,—bedecked for death
With wreath and garland!—Ignorant he hears
The muttering Priest,—feels ignorant his brows
White with the sprinkling of the salted meal
To his own labour owed,—and ignorant
Wonders, perchance, to see the lustral urn
Flash back the glimmer of the lifted knife
Too soon to dim its brightness with his blood!
And Priests are found to teach, and men to deem
That in the entrails, from the tortured frame
Yet reeking torn, they read the hest of Heaven!—
O race of mortal men! what lust, what vice
Of appetite unhallowed, makes ye bold
To gorge your greed on Being like your own?
Be wiselier warned:—forbear the barbarous feast,
Nor in each bloody morsel that ye chew
The willing labourer of your fields devour!

. . . . . .

All changes:—nothing perishes!—Now here,
Now there, the vagrant spirit roves at will,
The shifting tenant of a thousand homes:—
Now, elevate, ascends from beast to man,—
Now, retrograde, descends from man to beast;—
But *never dies!*—Upon the tablet's page
Erased, and written fresh, the characters
Take various shape,—the wax remains the same:—
So is it with the Soul that, migrating
Through all the forms of breathing life, retains
Unchanged its essence. Oh, be wise, and hear
Heaven's warning from my prophet-lips, nor dare

With impious slaughter, for your glutton-greed,
The kindly bond of Nature violate,
Nor from its home expel the Soul, perchance
Akin to yours, to nourish blood with blood!"

It has been handed down to us on good authority that Virgil, in his last illness, desired his friends to commit his 'Æneid' to the flames. It had not received his final corrections, and he was unwilling that it should go down to posterity less perfect than he could have made it. Evidences of this incompleteness are to be found, especially in the occasional inconsistencies of the narrative. Critics have busied themselves in discovering or imagining other faults which might have been corrected in revision. The desire, though it doubtless came from a mind enfeebled by morbid conditions of the body, was probably sincere. We can hardly believe as much of what Ovid tells us of his own intentions about the 'Metamorphoses:' "As for the verses which told of the changed forms—an unlucky work, which its author's banishment interrupted—these in the hour of my departure I put, sorrowing, as I put many other of my good things, into the flames with my own hands." Doubtless he did so; nothing could have more naturally displayed his vexation. But he could hardly have been ignorant that in destroying his manuscript he was not destroying his work. "As they did not perish altogether," he adds, "but still exist, I suppose that there were several copies of them." But it is scarcely conceivable that a poem containing as nearly as possible twelve thousand lines

should have existed in several copies by chance, or without the knowledge of the author. When he says that the work never received his final corrections, we may believe him, though we do not perceive any signs of imperfection. It is even possible that he employed some of his time during his banishment in giving some last touches to his verse.

However this may be, the work has been accepted by posterity as second in rank—second only to Virgil's epic—among the great monuments of Roman genius. It has been translated into every language of modern Europe that possesses a literature. Its astonishing ingenuity, the unfailing variety of its colours, the flexibility with which its style deals alike with the sublime and the familiar, and with equal facility is gay and pathetic, tender and terrible, have well entitled it to the honour, and justify the boast with which the poet concludes :—

"So crown I here a work that dares defy
The wrath of Jove, the fire, the sword, the tooth
Of all-devouring Time !—Come when it will
The day that ends my life's uncertain term,—
That on this corporal frame alone hath power
To work extinction,—high above the Stars
My nobler part shall soar,—my Name remain
Immortal,—wheresoe'er the might of Rome
O'erawes the subject Earth my Verse survive
Familiar in the mouths of men !—and, if
A Bard may prophesy, while Time shall last
Endure, and die but with the dying World !"

CHAPTER V.

THE FASTI, OR ROMAN CALENDAR.

In a rich and leisurely society the antiquarian has usually little difficulty in gaining a hearing. So it was at Rome, in the Augustan age. The study of the national antiquities seems to have been a particularly fashionable pursuit. Augustus, indeed, himself did his best to encourage it. It was the dream of his life to reawaken the old Roman patriotism, and to kindle in the men of his own day something like the sentiments of the past. The age might be frivolous and luxurious; but he knew well that the Roman mind was profoundly religious. There was all the machinery of an elaborate ecclesiastical ritual, and it still commanded respect. Augustus not only swayed the armies of Rome—he was also supreme pontiff; and no doubt any arrangement in which such a title had been omitted, would have been felt to be imperfect. In this capacity he could satisfy the vague and widely-diffused popular notion which connected Rome's greatness with her religion. The gods had been neglected, and their temples had fallen into decay during the civil wars; and we may well believe that Horace ex-

pressed what was in the minds of many when he prophesied dire judgments on the State unless the sacred buildings were restored.* To this work the emperor assiduously applied himself. He built temple after temple, established priesthoods, and revived old religious ceremonials. Everywhere in the capital were now to be seen the outward signs of piety and devotion. Religion, in fact—its history, its ritual, all its ancient associations—became subjects of popular interest; and, as might be expected, a fashionable poet could not do otherwise than recognise in his verses the growth of this new taste among his countrymen. Nor would he find any difficulty in doing so. A Roman could seldom be original, but, on the other hand, there was scarcely anything for which a model could not be found in Greek literature. Alexandria had long been a famous literary centre, and its scholars and authors had handled every conceivable subject, human and divine. There, in the third century B.C., in the reigns of Ptolemy Philadelphus and Ptolemy Euergetes, had flourished Callimachus, specially distinguished by his attainments as a grammarian and critic. He was at the head, as he no doubt well deserved to be, of the great library of Alexandria. Unfortunately, of his more learned works, which were on a vast scale, nothing but the titles and a few meagre fragments have come down to us. He was, however, a poet as well as a scholar, and some of his poems, hymns. and epigrams have survived. It appears that they were singularly popular, though, it must be admitted, they

* Odes, iii. 6.

remind us of the familiar proverb, "A poet is born, not made." However, it is certain that the Roman poets of the Augustan age liked them, and thought it worth their while to imitate them. Catullus has done this in his famous poem on the "Hair of Berenice." Propertius even made it his aim to be a Roman Callimachus, and sometimes became intolerably obscure and affected in the attempt. It need not surprise us that Ovid followed in the wake of two such eminent men. He knew the public for whom he was writing; he knew, too, what sort of poems would be approved by the emperor and the court. A learned poem, dwelling on the old worship of his country, and commemorating the glories of its great families, would appeal successfully to a wide circle of readers. For such a work he had a model ready to his hand in an epic of Callimachus, which appears to have given in detail a multitude of myths and legends, with some account of old customs and religious rites. This poem, which has not come down to us, was entitled "Causes," and was, it may be supposed, a learned poetical dissertation on the cause or origin of the various beliefs current among mankind, and of the outward forms in which they had embodied themselves. It was this elaborate work which Ovid undertook to imitate, and perhaps to popularise. The result is the poem commonly known as the 'Fasti.'

We may describe this work as a sort of handbook of the Roman Calendar, or as a poetical almanac, or as a ritual in verse. It gives, as Dean Merivale says, "the seasons and reasons" of every special religious

worship and ceremonial. The mythology of old Rome and the legends of her heroes are worked, and worked with wonderful success, into the texture of the poem. What in the hands of a mere Dryasdust would have been intolerably wearisome and dull, becomes under Ovid's treatment the lightest and pleasantest of reading. The marvellous ease and dexterity with which he turns his not always very plastic materials into the smoothest and most graceful verse, perpetually strikes a scholar with amazement. He takes a story or a legend from some old annalist, and tells it with a neatness and a finish which, in its own way, has never been rivalled. This was a charm which a Roman must have appreciated better than we can, but there were many other things which tended to make the 'Fasti' a thoroughly popular poem. It must have been pleasant to an ordinary reader to have picked up a good deal of antiquarian lore in a few hours of easy and delightful reading. The book would continually have been in the hands of the fashionable lady, who would think that it became her position to know something about the meaning and *rationale* of her religious observances. And we may take for granted it would please Augustus. Anything which familiarised the people with old beliefs and traditions would be certain to have his hearty sympathies. The poet too, of course, took care to extol and magnify the great family of the Julii, and to hint every now and then that Roman grandeur was providentially connected with their supremacy.

Such is the general idea and purpose of the poem.

That it was begun, and in a great measure completed, while the poet was still living at Rome, is beyond a doubt. His misfortune (he is speaking of his banishment) had, he says, interrupted his work. Like the 'Metamorphoses,' it was in an unfinished condition when he was driven into exile, and it is probable that he found employment and consolation in giving the finishing touches to both works. Some portions were certainly added during the last year of his life. In one passage he deplores the remoteness of his Scythian abode from his native Sulmo. In another, he speaks of the triumph which had been granted to Cæsar Germanicus for his victories over the Cherusci, Chatti, and Angrivarii—a triumph voted in A.D. 15, but not actually celebrated till two years afterwards. And a third passage seems to allude to a great work of temple restoration which the Emperor Tiberius brought to an end in the latter year.

The poem, as we have it, is in six books; originally (of this there can hardly be a doubt) it consisted of twelve, each month of the Roman calendar having a book devoted to it. The calendar, like our own week, had a religious basis. Some of the months took their names from Roman divinities. March had been the first month in the old calendar, according to which the year was divided into ten months. The first Cæsar, who laid his reforming hand on everything, brought his universal knowledge to bear on this intricate subject, and introduced a new arrangement by which the year was henceforth to be made up of twelve months, January being the first. Ovid represents the god Janus

as visibly appearing to him, and explaining his origin and attributes. A key is in his left hand, as a symbol of his august office as the Beginner and Opener of all things. He addresses Ovid as the "laborious poet of the Days," and then unfolds his various mysterious functions, and the meaning of the two faces which were regarded as his appropriate representation.

The poet describes himself as encouraged to continue the dialogue. He wants to know why the year should begin with cold, rather than what might seem a more appropriate commencement, the warmth of spring. He is told that it follows the sun, which now, gathering strength and lengthening its course, begins a new existence. "Why should not New-year's day be a holiday?" "We must not begin by setting an example of idleness." Then, after other questions, "What is the meaning of the customary gift of palm, and dried figs, and honey in the white comb?" "It is well that the year, if it is to be sweet, should begin with sweets." "But why presents of money?"—

"He smiled. 'Strange fancies of your time you hold,
To think that honey is as sweet as gold!
Scarce one I knew in Saturn's golden reign,
Whose master-passion was not love of gain.
And still with time it grew, and rules to-day
So widely, nothing can extend its sway.
Not thus were riches prized in days of yore,
When Rome was new, and scant its people's store.
Then Mars' great son, a cottage o'er his head,
Of river-sedges made his narrow bed.
So small his temple, Jove could scarcely stand
Upright, his earthen thunder in his hand

Undecked the shrines which now with jewels blaze;
Each lord of council led his sheep to graze:
And felt no shame that sleep should lap his head
With hay for pillow and with straw for bed.
Fresh from the plough the consul ruled the state,
And fined the owner of a pound * of plate.'"

And so the god goes on inveighing against the universal greed of gain, though he owns himself in the end not averse to the more sumptuous manners of modern days:—

"Bronze once they gave; now bronze gives place to gold,
And the new money supersedes the old.
We too—we praise the past, yet love a shrine
Of gold;—gold suits the majesty divine."

Janus then explains the significance of the emblems on the coins that were given on his festival. The double head on one side was his own likeness; the ship on the reverse was the memorial of that which in old time had borne Saturn, expelled from the throne of heaven, to his kingdom in Italy. A description of his happy reign follows, and then an antiquarian explanation of the situation of his temple, opening, as it did, on the two market-places of Rome—the cattle-market and the Forum properly so called. The last question which the curiosity of the poet suggests refers to the well-known custom which kept the temple open when the State was at war, and shut it on the rare occasions (three only are recorded as having occurred dur-

* The real quantity allowed was *five pounds;* but the translation fairly represents the exaggeration of the original.

ing the time of the Commonwealth) when it was at peace :—

"'In war, all bolts drawn back, my portals stand,
Open for hosts that seek their native land ;
In peace, fast closed, they bar the outward way,
And still shall bar it under Cæsar's sway.'
He spake : before, behind, his double gaze
All that the world contained at once surveys ;
And all was peace ; for now with conquered wave,
The Rhine, Germanicus, thy triumph gave.
Peace and the friends of peace immortal make,
Nor let the lord of earth his work forsake !"

Under the same day, the first of January, is recorded the dedication of the temples of Jupiter and Æsculapius. Under the fifth is noted the setting of the constellation of Cancer — information which the poet tells us he means to give whenever occasion demands. Five other days of the month are similarly distinguished. On the eleventh of January occurs the festival of the *Agonalia*, and Ovid takes the opportunity to display his etymological learning in accounting for the name. Was it given because the priest, as he stood ready to smite the victim, said, "Shall I strike?" (*Agone?*) or because the beasts do not come of their own accord, but are driven (*aguntur*) to the sacrifice? Or is the word *Agnalia* (*the sacrifice of lambs*) with the "*o*" inserted? or does it come from the *agony* with which the victim sees the shadow of the sacrificial knife in the water? or is it derived from the Greek word for the games (*agones*) which formed part of the festival in old times? Ovid's own view is that

agonia was an old word for the animals which it was customary to sacrifice. With characteristic ingenuity, he digresses into an elegant history of the growth of sacrifice. Meal and salt sufficed for the simple offerings of early days. No spices then had come from across the sea. Savin and the crackling bay-leaf gave perfume enough; and it was only the wealthy who could add violets to the garlands of wild flowers. The earliest victim was the pig, which was sacrificed to Ceres, in punishment for the injury that he did to the crops under her protection. Warned by his fate, the goat should have spared the vine-shoots; but he offended, and fell a victim to the wrath of Bacchus. The pig and the goat were guilty. But how had the ox and the sheep offended? The ox first suffered at the bidding of Proteus, from whom the shepherd Aristæus, disconsolate at the loss of his bees, learnt that a carcass buried in the ground would furnish him with a new supply.* The sheep was guilty, it would seem, of eating the sacred herb vervain. What animal could hope to escape, when the ox and the sheep perished? The Sun-god demanded the horse, swiftest of animals; Diana, the hind, which once had been made the substitute for the maiden Iphigenia.† "I

* This notion that the corruption of animal matter would produce bees seems to have been a serious belief among the ancients. Virgil, who writes about bees as if he really knew something of the subject, recommends the process with apparent seriousness, though it is possible that he used it as a convenient introduction for the legend of Aristæus, with its beautiful episode of Orpheus and Eurydice.

† The feeling of later times revolted against the legend which

myself," says Ovid, "have seen the wild tribes who dwell near the snow of Hæmus sacrifice the dog to Hecate." Even the ass falls a victim to Silenus, who could never forgive him for an untimely bray. Birds suffer, because they reveal the counsels of the gods by the indications of the future which soothsayers detect in their movements and their cries. The goose is not protected by the service which he did to Rome in wakening the defenders of the Capitol. And the cock, who summons the day, is made an offering to the Goddess of Night.

The thirteenth of the month introduces the story of Evander, one of the graceful narrations with which Ovid relieves the antiquarian details of the 'Fasti.' Evander is indeed a conspicuous personage in Italian legend. An Arcadian prince, banished in early youth from his native land, but not for any fault of his own, he had settled in Italy many years before the Trojan war. He was in extreme old age when Æneas, carrying with him the fortunes of the future Rome, landed on the Latian shore; and he gave to the struggle the support of his first alliance. Virgil in his great epic has made a copious use of the story. The voyage of the Trojan chief up the unknown stream of Tiber to the homely court of the Arcadian king, his hospitable reception, the valour and untimely death of the young Pallas, who leads his father's troops to fight by the

represented Iphigenia as really sacrificed to appease the powers which hindered her father's enterprise. Just so we find the story of Jephthah's vow softened down to something less barbarous.

side of the destined heirs of Italy, furnish some of the most striking scenes in the 'Æneid.' Ovid, in describing Evander's arrival in Italy, puts into his mouth a prophecy of the future greatness of Rome, which with characteristic dexterity he turns into elaborate flattery of Tiberius and Livia, the emperor's mother. This passage, which, it is evident, was written after the death of Augustus, is one of the many proofs that the Fasti were kept under revision until close upon the end of the poet's life. To the legend of Evander is attached the story of Hercules and Cacus. Roman writers were anxious to make their own country the scene of some of the wondrous exploits of the great "knight-errant" of antiquity. The tale ran as follows:—

Somewhere near the strait which joins the Atlantic to the Inner Sea dwelt Geryones, a hideous monster with triple body, master of a herd of oxen of fabulous beauty. Him the wandering Hercules slew, and driving the cattle homewards to Argos, found himself—having, it would seem, somewhat lost his way—near Evander's city, on the banks of Tiber. He was hospitably entertained by the Arcadian; and his cattle meanwhile wandered at their will over the fields. Next morning he missed two of the bulls. It seemed in vain to search for them. They had been stolen, indeed, but the robber had dragged them tail-foremost into his cave, and the device was sufficient to puzzle the simple-minded hero. The robber was Cacus, the terror of the Aventine forest, a son of Vulcan, huge of frame, and strong as he was huge, whose dwelling was

in a cave, which even the wild beasts could hardly find, its entrance hideous with limbs and heads of men, and its floor white with human bones. Hercules was about to depart, when the bellowing of the imprisoned oxen reached him. Guided by the sound, he found the cave. Cacus had blocked the entrance with a large mass of rock, which even five yoke of oxen could scarcely have stirred. But the shoulders that had supported the heavens were equal to the task. The rock gave way, and the robber had to fight for his prey and his life. First with fists, then with stones and sticks he fought, and finding himself worsted, had recourse to his father's aid, and vomited forth fire in the face of the foe. All was in vain; the knotted club descended, and the monster fell dying on the ground. The victor sacrificed one of the cattle to Jupiter, and left a memorial of himself in the ox-market, the name of which was traced, not to the commonplace explanation of its use, but to the anima. which the victorious son of Jupiter had there sacrificed to his sire.

What remains in the book may be passed over with brief notice. The thirteenth of the month was distinguished as the day on which Augustus had amused the Roman people, and gratified his own passion for veiling despotism under republican forms, by restoring to the senate the control of the provinces in which peace had been restored. On the eighteenth was commemorated the dedication of the Temple of Concord, first made when Camillus had reconciled contending orders in the State, and renewed by Tiberius after

completing his German conquests. A memorable holiday, that of the "sowing day," was fixed at the discretion of the pontiff, near the end of the month. The thirtieth commemorated the dedication of the altar to Peace, and afforded the poet yet another opportunity of offering his homage to the house of Augustus :—

"Her tresses bound with Actium's * crown of bay,
Peace comes ; in all the world, sweet goddess, stay !
Her altar flames, ye priests, with incense feed,
Bid 'neath the axe the snow-white victim bleed !
Pray willing heaven, that Cæsar's house may stand,
Long as the peace it gives a wearied land !"

It would weary the reader, even did space permit, to go in like detail through the poet's account of each month. He begins each with an attempt to determine the etymology of its name. That of February, he tells us, was to be found in the word *februa*, a name given by the Romans of old to certain offerings of a purifying and expiatory nature used at this time. The purification of the flocks and herds, as well as of human beings, was a very important element in the religious life of Rome ; and the words *lustrum* and *lustratio*, which denote certain forms of purification, are well known to every student of Roman history. February is therefore the "purifying"

* At the battle of Actium (fought B.C. 31) the civil wars which had raged at intervals for more than sixty years were brought to a final close by the victory of Octavius Cæsar over his rival Antony.

month; and its name thus testifies to a widespread belief in the need of cleansing and expiation. March, of course, takes its name from the god Mars, the father of Rome's legendary founder. For April the poet gives a fanciful etymology. "Spring," he says, "opens" (*aperit*) "all things;" and so, he adds, "April, according to tradition, means the 'open' time" (*apertum tempus*). It is the time of love; and Venus during this month is in the ascendant, "the goddess who is all-powerful in earth, in heaven, in sea." For the next month, May, Ovid confesses that he has no satisfactory theory to offer as to its name. He suggests that it is formed from the root of *major* and *majestas*. "May," he says, "is the month for old men; and its special function is to teach the young reverence for age. "Majestas," indeed, was regarded, after Roman fashion—which delighted in real personifications—as a divinity, whom Romulus and Numa worshipped as the upholder of filial reverence and obedience, and also as the rightful disposer of the offices and honours of the State in their due order. With this divinity the month of May was associated. June is Juno's month, though Ovid admits that the explanation is doubtful. He represents the goddess as appearing to him in a secluded grove when he was pondering within himself on the origin of the name. She tells him that, as he has undertaken to celebrate in his verse the religious festivals of Rome, he has thereby won for himself the privilege of beholding the divine essence. As she was both the wife and sister of Jupiter, her month would speak to the public

of Rome of the marriage-tie and of family-bonds. With the sixth book the Fasti, as we have them, come to an end.

The name having been thus accounted for, astronomical occurrences, religious ceremonies, matters of ritual, the anniversaries of the dedications of temples and altars, and the like, are duly recorded, the poet availing himself of every opportunity to introduce some historical or mythological legend. They are the most attractive part of the work, for Ovid is always happy in narrative. Among the most noticeable of the historical class is the tale of the three hundred and six Fabii who fell on the plains of Veii, in the battle of the Cremera, fighting with an heroic courage, in which Roman patriotism found a match for the great deed of Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans at Thermopylæ. Indeed, though it would be rash to deny altogether the genuineness of the narrative, there is something suspicious about the Roman legend. The historians of Rome had indeed a singular power of embellishment and invention, and it is not doing them any injustice to suppose that the original story, whatever it may have been, grew somewhat beneath their hands. The legend, to which the reader may give such credence as he pleases, runs thus :—

In the early days of the Commonwealth, Rome was troubled much by dissension at home, and by the attacks of her Etruscan neighbours on the north. The great house of the Fabii had fallen into disfavour with their countrymen. What could they do better than at once rid the city of a presence which was no

longer welcome, while they served their country by attacking its enemies abroad? So they go forth, a little band, wholly composed of men of the Fabian race. "One house," says the poet, "had taken on itself the whole might and burden of Rome: any one of them was worthy to be a commander." They cross the Cremera, one of the tributaries of the Tiber, a little stream then swollen by the melting of the snows of winter. The enemy fly before them; they penetrate into a wooded plain well fitted for the treacherous ambuscade. "Whither do ye rush, O noble house? to your peril do you trust the foe. Simple-hearted nobility, beware of the weapons of treachery!" All in a moment the enemy issue from the woods, and escape is utterly cut off. "What can a few brave heroes do against so many thousands? What resource is left them in so dire a crisis?" But the Fabii did not die unavenged: "as the boar in the forests of Laurentum, when at last brought to bay, deals havoc among the hounds," so these intrepid warriors fall amid a multitude of slain foes. "Thus," as the poet says, "a single day sent forth all the Fabii to the war; a single day destroyed them all." But one of the family was left, a stripling, who could not as yet bear arms. This was a special providence. The gods took care that the house descended from Hercules should not be utterly extinguished. It had a great destiny before it. "The stripling was preserved," the poet says, "that he who was surnamed Maximus, as Hannibal's formidable antagonist, might hereafter be born," the man who, by his policy of delay (*cunctando*,

whence his surname of Cunctator), was to restore the fortunes of Rome.

Another well-told legend is that of the translation * and deification of Romulus. "When his father, mighty in arms, saw the new walls of the city completed, and many a war ended by his son's prowess, he uttered this prayer to Jupiter: 'Rome's power now is firmly planted; she needs not my child's help. Restore the son to the father; though one has perished, I shall still have one left me in his own stead and in the stead of Remus. There will be one for thee to raise to the azure vault of heaven: thou hast spoken the word; Jove's word must be fulfilled.'" The prayer was at once granted, and, amid parting clouds, the king, while he was in the act of administering justice to his people, was carried up with peals of thunder and lightning-flashes into the heavens, on his father's steeds. The grief of Rome was solaced by a vision of the departed hero, who appeared to one of the Julii as he was on his way from Alba Longa. "Suddenly, with a crash, the clouds on his left hand parted asunder; he drew back, and his hair stood on end. Romulus seemed to stand before him—a grand and more than human figure, adorned with the robe of state. He seemed to say, Forbid Rome's citizens to mourn; their tears must not insult my divinity. Let them offer incense and worship a new god, Quirinus, and pursue their country's arts and the soldier's work."

* Book ii. 481.

Sometimes the poet takes his readers into the obscurer bypaths of the old Italian mythology. These portions of the 'Fasti' have an interest for scholars, though it would appear that Ovid had by no means a profound or philosophical acquaintance with the religion of his ancestors. We meet with the names of divinities which, to the ordinary reader, are altogether unfamiliar. Such a name is that of Anna Perenna, a deified sister of the Phœnician Dido, according to the accounts both of Virgil and Ovid. She was a river-nymph, and to this her name Perenna (everlasting) was meant to point. Her story * is related at great length by Ovid. Her yearly festival, it appears, was celebrated on the Ides of March, and was a somewhat grotesque ceremony. The populace had a sort of picnic on the grassy banks of the Tiber, and indulged themselves very freely. Indeed there was a distinct motive to drink without stint, as it was the custom to pray for as many years of life as they had drunk cups of wine. The connection between the two is not to us very obvious; but, if we may trust Ovid, there were those who would drink out the years of the long-lived Nestor in the hope of attaining that worthy's age. Some, too, to judge from the number of their cups, deserved to rival the Sibyl in longevity. There they sang all the songs they had heard at the theatre, and having drunk and sung to their heart's content, they had a merry dance. One is not surprised to hear that many of them cut sorry figures on their return

* Book iii. 523.

home. "I lately met them," says our poet; "a drunken old woman was dragging along a drunken old man." Let us hope their prayer for a long life was answered. He ends his account of this Anna Perenna with an amusing little story about her. When she had been made a goddess, Mars paid her a visit, and had some private conversation with her. "You are worshipped," he said, "in my month; I have great hopes from your kind assistance. I am on fire with love of Minerva; we both of us bear arms, and long have I been cherishing my passion. Contrive that, as we follow the same pursuit, we may be united. The part well becomes you, O good-natured old woman!" Anna professed her willingness to help the god of war, and undertook the delicate business of arranging a meeting. However, for a time she put him off with promises; but at last the ardent lover was, as he thought, to be gratified. So the god hurried off to meet the object of his affections; but when in his impatience he raised her veil, and was about to snatch a kiss, he found that Anna had played him a trick, and had dressed herself up as Minerva. He was naturally angry and ashamed of himself, all the more so as the new goddess laughed him to scorn, and as his old flame Venus thoroughly enjoyed the joke. It appears that this legendary hoax, which Ovid tells in his best way, gave occasion to a number of sly and humorous sayings among the merry people on the banks of the Tiber. It was, no doubt, great fun for them to think of the august deity to whom their city

wed its founder and first king, having been "sold" in such a fashion.

It will be seen from this instance that Ovid knew how to relieve what might seem a dry subject with a few light touches. His 'Fasti' have many amusing as well as beautiful passages, and strikingly illustrate his consummate skill in versified narrative.

CHAPTER VI.

DEPARTURE FROM ROME—THE PLACE OF EXILE.

A WELL-KNOWN paragraph of Gibbon's great work describes the hopeless condition of any one who sought to fly from the anger of the man who ruled the Roman world, and to whom, in right of that rule, all human civilisation belonged. The fugitive could not hide himself within its limits; and to seek escape among the savage and hostile tribes which lay beyond them was an idea too horrible, if it had not been too preposterous, to entertain. The historian illustrates his remarks by the example of Ovid. "He received an order to leave Rome in so many days, and to transport himself to Tomi. Guards and jailers were unnecessary." But a culprit visited with the severer forms of the punishment of exile would have been more carefully watched. Such persons were commonly escorted to the selected spot by a centurion whom, in more than one instance, we find privately instructed to inflict the capital penalty which the name of exile had only veiled. But the concession which, in the case of the milder sentence, mitigated the harshness of the punishment, rendered such custody needless. The banished person

was then permitted to retain the income of his property, and the permission was an effectual tie to the place in which alone that income would be paid to him.

Another proof of what has been urged in a previous chapter, that Ovid had no dangerous secrets in his keeping, may be found in the prolonged period which was allowed him to prepare for his banishment. So prolonged was it, he tells us in his own account of his final departure from his home, that he had suffered himself to forget the inevitable end, and was at last taken by surprise. The whole account is eminently graphic and not a little pathetic, and it shall be given as nearly as possible in the poet's own words :—

"When there starts up before me the sad, sad picture of that night which was the last of my life in Rome, when I remember the night on which I left so many of my treasures, even now the tear falls from my eyes. The day had almost come on which Cæsar had bid me pass beyond the farthest limits of Italy. But I had not had the thought of preparation. Nay, the very time had been against me : so long the delay, that my heart had grown slothful at the thought of it. I had taken no pains to select my slaves, or to choose a companion, or to procure the clothing or the money that a banished man required. I was as dazed as one who, struck by the bolts of Jupiter, lives, but is all unconscious of his life. But when my very grief had cleared away the mist from my soul, and I was at last myself again, I addressed for the last time ere my departure my sorrowing friends,—there were but one or two out of all the crowd. My loving wife clasped me close ; bitter my tears, still bitterer hers, as they ever poured down her innocent cheeks. My daughter was far away on African shores,

and could not have heard of her father's fate. Look where you would, there was wailing and groaning, and all the semblance of a funeral, clamorous in its grief. My funeral it was; husband and wife and the very slaves were mourners; every corner of my house was full of tears. Such—if one may use a great example for a little matter—such was the aspect of Troy in its hour of capture. And now the voices of men and dogs were growing still, and the moon was guiding high in heaven the steeds of night. As I regarded it, and saw in its light the two summits of the Capitol,—the Capitol that adjoined but did not protect my home,—'Powers,' I cried, 'who dwell in these neighbouring shrines, and temples that my eyes may never look upon again, and ye gods, dwelling in the lofty city of Romulus, gods whom now I must leave, take my farewell for ever! Too late, indeed, and already wounded, I snatch up the shield; yet acquit, I pray, my banishment of an odious crime; and tell the human denizen of heaven * what was the error that deceived me, lest he think it a crime rather than a mistake; tell it that the author of my punishment may see the truth which you know. My god once propitiated, I shall be wretched no longer.' These were the prayers that I addressed to heaven; my wife, with sobs that stopped her words half-way, spoke many more. She, too, before our home-gods threw herself with dishevelled hair, and touched with trembling lips our extinguished hearth. Many a prayer she poured out in vain to their hostile deity, words that might avail naught for the husband whom she mourned. And now night, hurrying down the steep, forbade further delay, and the Bear of Arcady had traversed half the sky. What could I do? Tender love for my country held me fast; but that night was the last before my doom of banishment. Ah! how often would I say, when some one would bid me haste, 'Why hurry me? think whither you would hasten my steps, and whither I

* Augustus.

must go!' Ah! how often did I pretend to have settled on some certain hour which would suit my purposed voyage! Thrice I touched the threshold,* thrice I was called back; my very feet, as if to indulge my heart, lingered on their way. Often, farewell once spoken, I said many a word; often, as if I was really departing, I bestowed my last kisses. Often I gave the same commands; I cheated my own self, as I looked on the pledges so dear to my eyes. And then, 'Why do I hasten? It is Scythia to which I am being sent; it is Rome which I have to leave; both justify delay. My wife is refused to me for ever, and yet we both live; my family and the dear member of that faithful family; yes, and you, my companions, whom I loved with a brother's love, hearts joined to mine with the loyalty of a Theseus! while I may, I embrace you; perchance I may never do so again; the hour that is allowed me is so much gain.' It is the end: I leave my words unfinished, while I embrace in heart all that is dearest to me. While I speak, and we all weep, bright shining in the height of heaven, Lucifer, fatal star to us, had risen; I am rent in twain, as much as if I were leaving my limbs behind; one part of my very frame seemed to be torn from the other. Such was the agony of Mettus when he found the avengers of his treachery in the steeds driven opposite ways. Then rose on high the cries and the groanings of my household, then the hands of mourners beat uncovered breasts, and then my wife, clinging to my shoulder as I turned away, mingled with her tears these mournful words: 'You cannot be torn from me; together, ah! together will we go. I will follow you; an exile myself, I will be an exile's wife. For me too is the journey settled; me too that distant land shall receive; 'tis but a small burden that will be added to the exile's bark. 'Tis the wrath of Cæsar that bids thee leave thy country—

* To touch the threshold with the foot in crossing it was considered unlucky.

'tis love that bids me; love shall be in Cæsar's place.' Such was her endeavour,—such had been her endeavour before; scarcely would she surrender, overpowered by expediency. I go forth; it was rather being carried forth without the funeral pomp; I go all haggard, with hair drooping over unshaven face; and she, they tell me, as in her grief for me the mist rose all before her, fell fainting in the midst of the dwelling; and when, her hair all smirched with the unseemly dust, she rose again, lifting her limbs from the cold ground, she bewailed now herself, now her deserted hearth, and called again and again the name of her lost husband, and groaned, not less than had she seen the high-built funeral pile claim her daughter's body or mine. Gladly would she have died, and lost all feeling in death; and yet she lost it not, out of thought for me. Long may she live; live, and ever help with her aid her absent—so the Fates will have it—her absent husband."—The 'Sorrows,' i. 3.

It was in the month of December that the poet left Rome. One faithful friend, the Fabius Maximus of whom we have heard before, accompanied him. Following the Appian road to Brundusium, then, as after many centuries it has become again, the usual route of western travellers bound eastward, he crossed the Adriatic. A fearful storm, not unusual at this season, encountered him on his way; and the indefatigable poet describes it in his most elegant verse—too elegant, indeed, to allow us to suppose that it was written, as it claims to be, in the very midst of the peril. One god was hostile to him. He does not forget his flattery, and asks might not another (he means Augustus) help him? So Minerva had helped Ulysses, while Neptune sought to destroy him. But it seems vain

to pray; the winds will not allow the prayers to reach the gods to whom they are sent. How dreadful is the sight!—these waves that now reach the heavens, now seem about to sink to hell. He can only be thankful that his wife is not with him, and does not know of his peril:—

> "An exile's fate her pious tears deplore,
> This is the woe she mourns, and knows no more;
> Knows not her spouse the angry waters' prey,
> Tossed by wild winds, and near his latest day.
> Kind Heaven, I thank thee, that she is not here,
> Else death had chilled me with a double fear.
> Now though I perish, this the Fates will give—
> Still in my spirit's better half to live."

His terror did not prevent him from observing or imagining that each tenth wave was especially formidable—a fact which he states in an ingenious phrase that, if it was really invented in the midst of the storm, does special credit to its author:—

> "The ninth it follows, the eleventh precedes."

The tempest abated, and the poet reached his destination, Lechæum, the eastern harbour of "Corinth on the two seas." Traversing the isthmus to the western port, Cenchrea, he embarked again. This time he tells us the name of his ship. The passage is notable as one of the many instances in which our poet's felicitous minuteness of description increases our knowledge of antiquity. Nowhere else is the distinction drawn so clearly between the union of the tutelary deity under whose protection the ship was supposed to be, and the

representation of the object from which it got its name. In this instance the vessel was called The Helmet, and bore on its deck an image of "Minerva of the Yellow Locks." It took him, he tells us, straight to the Troad, or north-western corner of Asia Minor. Thence it sailed to Imbros, and from this island again to Samothrace. It seems to have continued its voyage to the place of the poet's destination, and to have conveyed thither his effects. Ovid himself took passage in a coasting vessel to the neighbouring shore of Thrace, and made the rest of his journey overland.

Tomi, or, as Ovid himself calls it, Tomis, was a city of Greek origin (it was a colony of Miletus), situated on the western coast of the Black Sea, about two hundred miles to the north of Byzantium. The name may be rendered in English by *The Cuts*. Possibly it was derived from a canal or fosse cut to the nearest point of the Danube, which here approaches, just before making its last bend to the north, within the distance of fifty miles. The so-called *Trajan Wall* may be the remains of such a work, which probably was intended for purposes of defence rather than of commerce, though the project of a ship canal between the two points has been mooted more than once. The lively fancy of the poet found in the legend of Medea a more romantic origin. The wicked princess, who embodied the poet's conception of the wild unscrupulous passion of the oriental character, had resorted, when closely pursued in her flight, to a terrible expedient. She slew her young brother Absyrtus, the

darling of the angry father who was following her. His head she fixed on a prominent rock where it could not escape the notice of the pursuers. His limbs she scattered about the fields. She hoped, and not in vain, that the parent's heart would bid him delay his voyage till he had collected the human remains. It was said that Tomi was the place where the deed was done, and that its name preserved the tradition of its horrible details.

The town is now called Kostendje, a corruption of Constantina, a name which it received for the same reason which changed Byzantium into Constantinople. It was situated in the province of Lower Mœsia. Though not exactly on the frontier, which was here, nominally at least, the Danube, it was practically an outpost of the empire. The plain between it and that river, a district now known by the name of Dobrudscha, was open to the incursions of the unsubdued tribes from the further side of the Danube, who, when they had contrived to effect the passage of the river, found nothing to hinder them till they came to the walls of Tomi.

Ovid describes the place of his exile in the gloomiest language. Such language, indeed, was natural in the mouth of a Roman. To him no charm of climate, no beauty of scenery, no interest of historical association, could make a place endurable, while Rome, the one place in the world which was worth dwelling in, was forbidden to him. It might have been supposed that travel in Greece would have been attractive to Cicero, profoundly versed as he was in its philo-

sophy and literature; but he found it no consolation for his banishment from Italy. And the younger Seneca, whom we may almost call a professional philosopher, found nothing to compensate him for enforced absence from the capital in the exquisite scenery and climate of Corsica. But Tomi, if its unfortunate inhabitant is to be believed, combined in itself every horror. It was in the near neighbourhood of savage and barbarous tribes, and was safe from attack only while the broad stream of the Danube flowed between it and the enemy. The climate was terrible; the snow lay often unmelted for two years together. The north wind blew with such fury that it levelled buildings with the ground, or carried away their roofs. The natives went about clad in garments of skin, with their faces only exposed to the air. Their hair, their beards, were covered with icicles. The very wine froze: break the jar and it stood a solid lump; men took not draughts but bites of it. The rivers were covered with ice; the Danube itself, though it was as broad as the Nile, was frozen from shore to shore, and became a highway for horses and men. The sea itself, incredible as it may seem, is frozen. "I," says the poet, "have myself walked on it."

> "Had such, Leander, been the sea
> That flowed betwixt thy love and thee,
> Never on Helles' narrow strait
> Had come the scandal of thy fate."

"The dolphins cannot leap after their wont: let the north wind rage as it will, it raises no waves. The ships stand firmly fixed as in stone, and the oar can-

not cleave the waters. You may see the very fish bound fast in the ice, imprisoned but still alive. But the worst of all the horrors of winter is the easy access which it gives to the barbarian foe. Their vast troops of cavalry, armed with the far-reaching bow, scour the whole country. The rustics fly for their lives, and leave their scanty provisions to be plundered. Some, more unlucky, are carried off into captivity; some perish by the arrows which this cruel enemy dips in poison. And all that the enemy cannot carry or drive off, he burns."

It is difficult to suppose that some of these statements are not exaggerated. The climate of Bulgaria (the name which Lower Mœsia has had since its invasion by the Bulgarians in the seventh century) bears little resemblance to that which Ovid describes. According to Humboldt's maps of the isothermal lines of the world, it should have a temperature not unlike that of northern Spain. Its soil is described as fertile, and the vine is mentioned as one of its chief products. The Danube is not frozen over in the lower as it is in the upper parts of its course; and though the harbours of some of the Black Sea ports—as, for instance, of Odessa—are sometimes blocked for a part of the winter, the phenomenon is not known in the neighbourhood of Kostendje. On the other hand, Ovid's statements are remarkably precise. He anticipates that they will be disbelieved, and he solemnly avers their truth. And he gives among his descriptions one curious fact which he is not likely to have known except from personal observation. that fish retain their

vitality even when firmly embedded in ice. It is quite possible that the climate may have materially changed since Ovid's time. On more than one occasion the classical poets speak of severities of cold such as are not now experienced in Italy and Greece. If we allow something for such change, and something also for the exaggeration which not only expressed a genuine feeling of disgust, but might possibly have the effect of moving compassion, we shall probably be right.

Ovid's life in exile, the details of which are brought out in the poems which belong to this period, lasted about eight years. He left Rome in the month of December following his fifty-first birthday; he died some time before the beginning of the September after his fifty-ninth.

CHAPTER VII.

THE POEMS OF EXILE: THE TRISTIA, OR THE 'SORROWS.'

Ovid's pen was not idle during the melancholy years of exile which closed his life. He probably, as has been said before, revised the 'Metamorphoses.' It is certain that he added largely to the 'Fasti.' But the special poems of exile are the 'Sorrows,' the 'Letters from the Pontus,' and the 'Ibis.' In the 'Sorrows' and the 'Letters from the Pontus' Ovid pours forth in an unceasing stream his complaints against the cruelty of fate and the miseries of his exile; his supplications for the removal, or at least the mitigation, of his sentence; and his entreaties to those who had known him in his prosperity, that they would help, or, if help was impossible, would at least remember their fallen friend. It must be confessed that they lack the brilliancy of the earlier poems. The genius of the poet stagnated, as he says himself, in the inclement climate, and amidst the barbarous associations of his place of exile. And the reader is wearied by the garrulous monotony of nearly six thousand verses, in which the absorbing subject of the poet's own sorrows is only exchanged for flattery—all

the more repulsive, because we know it to have been unavailing—of the ruler from whose anger or policy he was suffering. Yet there are not wanting points of interest. There are graphic sketches of scenery and character, touches of pathos, here and there even a gleam of humour, and sometimes, when the occasion brings him to speak of his own genius, and of the fame to which he looked forward, an assertion of independence and dignity, which is infinitely refreshing amidst his unmanly repining against his fate, and the yet more unmanly adulations by which he hoped to escape it.

The first book of the 'Sorrows' was written and despatched to Rome before Ovid had reached his allotted place of banishment. A preface commends to all who still remembered him at Rome the little volume, which would remind them of the banished Ovid. It was to go in the guise that became an exile's book. It was to be without the ornaments which distinguished more fortunate volumes. A characteristic passage tells us what these ornaments were, and gives us as good an idea as we can anywhere get of the appearance of a Roman book. The parchment or paper, on the inner side of which was the writing, was tinted on the outer of a warm and pleasing colour, by means of saffron or cedar-oil. The title of the book was written in vermilion letters. The stick round which the roll was made had bosses of ivory, or some other ornamental material, and the ends of the roll were polished and coloured black. Any erasure was considered to be a great disfigurement: of

such disfigurement the poet's book was not to be ashamed. Every reader would understand that sufficient cause was found in the author's tears. From the same preface we may conjecture that the volume was not actually published, but was, as we should say, printed for private circulation. It was to go to the poet's home, and find its resting-place, not in the book-stalls round the columns of the temple of Apollo, but on the shelves of the writer's own mansion. Nowhere, indeed, throughout the 'Sorrows' does Ovid venture to name any one of his friends to whom he addresses the various poems of which the several books are composed. His wife only is excepted. If any peril had ever threatened her, it had now passed. Indeed, if the poet is to be believed, she desired nothing more than that she should be allowed to share her husband's exile. But it was evidently a perilous thing for friends of the banished man to be supposed to keep up any intercourse with him. Time, though it brought no relaxation to the severity of the punishment, seemed to have removed something of the bitterness with which the poet's name was regarded at Rome. The 'Letters from the Pontus' are addressed by name to various friends, and we find from them that, instead of the two or three faithful hearts who alone were left to the fallen man in the early days of his ruin, he had during the latter years of his exile a goodly number of correspondents.

Of the second poem in the book, describing the imminent peril of shipwreck in which he found himself on his voyage from Italy, mention has already

been made. He returns to the same subject in the fourth elegy, mentioning, not without a certain pathos, that the adverse winds had driven him back within sight of that Italy on which it was forbidden him again to set foot.

The fourth poem, describing his departure from his home, has been already given at length. The fifth makes one of the many fruitless appeals for help which Ovid continued throughout the weary years of his banishment to address to any friend whom he thought sufficiently bold to intercede on his behalf with the offended Cæsar. An elegy addressed to his wife,—the first of many poems in which he warmly expresses his gratitude for the devotion with which she was defending his interests against enemies and faithless friends; another, addressed to a friend, commending to his notice the book of the Metamorphoses, and excusing, on the ground of the sudden interruption caused by the author's banishment, its many imperfections; and a pathetic remonstrance with one who had once professed a great friendship for him, but had deserted him in his hour of need,—these, with two other poems, complete the first book of the 'Sorrows.' It may be noticed, as a proof of the popularity which the poet had attained, that the friend whom Ovid addresses was accustomed to wear in a ring a gem engraved with Ovid's portrait. Gems were in one sense what miniatures were to the last generation, and what photographs are to ourselves; but both the material and the process of engraving were costly, and it is probable that it was only persons of some

note who enjoyed the distinction of having their features thus perpetuated. There is a traditionary likeness of Ovid, which may possibly have come down to us in this way. It is a curious fact that, thanks to this art of gem-engraving, we are well acquainted with the faces of men separated from us by twenty centuries and more, while the outward semblance of those who are within three or four hundred years of our own time has been irrecoverably lost.

The second book of the 'Sorrows' is an elaborate *Apologia pro vita sua*, addressed to Augustus. He hopes that, as verse had been his ruin, so verse might help to ameliorate his condition. "The emperor himself had acknowledged its power. At his bidding the Roman matrons had chanted the song of praise to Cybele; and he had ordered the hymns which at the Secular Games had been raised to Phœbus.* Might he not hope that the wrath of the terrestrial god might be propitiated in the same way? To pardon was the prerogative of deity. Jupiter himself, when he had hurled his thunders, allowed the clear sky again to be seen. And who had been more merciful than Augustus? Ovid had seen many promoted to wealth and power who had borne arms against him. No such guilt had been the poet's. He had never forgotten to offer his prayers for the ruler of Rome, had never

* The Secular Games were celebrated once in a century. This, at least, was the theory; but more than one emperor found it convenient to shorten the period. The hymn to Phœbus of which Ovid speaks has been preserved in the well-known Secular Hymn (Carmen Sæculare) of Horace.

failed to sing his praises. And had he not received the emperor's approval? When the knights had passed in review before him, the poet's horse had been duly restored to him.* Nay, he had filled high stations of responsibility, had been a member of the Court of the Hundred, and even of the Council of Ten, which presided over it. And all had been ruined by an unhappy mistake! Yet the emperor had been merciful. Life had been spared to him, and his paternal property. No decree of the senate or of any judge had condemned him to banishment. The emperor had avenged his own wrongs by an exercise of his own power, but avenged them with a punishment so much milder than it might have been, as to leave him hopes for the future." These hopes he proceeds to commend to the emperor by elaborate flattery. He appeals successively to the gods, who, if they loved Rome, would prolong the days of its lord; to the country, which would always be grateful for the blessings of his rule; to Livia, the one wife who was worthy of him, and for whom he was the one worthy husband; to the triumphs which his grandsons † were winning in his name and under his auspices; and implores that if return may not be granted to him, at least some milder exile may be conceded. Here he was on the very verge of the empire, and within reach of its enemies. Was it well that a Roman citizen

* A knight disgraced by the censor (the emperor was perpetual censor) had his horse taken from him.

† Drusus, the son, and Germanicus the nephew and adopted son, of Tiberius, Augustus's step son.

should be in peril of captivity among barbarous tribes? Ovid then proceeds to set forth an apology for his offending poems. To the real cause of his banishment he makes one brief allusion. More he dared not say. "I am not worth so much as that I should renew your wounds, O Cæsar: it is far too much that you should once have felt the pang." That in this error, not in any offending poem, lay the real cause of his fall, Ovid was doubtless well aware. Hence it is not too much to suppose that the apology which follows was intended rather for posterity than for the person to whom it is addressed. It is needless to examine it in detail. The sum and substance of it is, that the poems were written for those to whom they could not possibly do any harm; that readers to whose modesty they might be likely to do an injury had been expressly warned off from them; that a mind perversely disposed would find evil anywhere, even in the most sacred legends; that, if everything whence the opportunity for wrong might arise was to be condemned, the theatre, the circus, the temples with their porticoes so convenient for forbidden meetings, and their associations so strangely tinged with licence, would share the same fate. As for himself, his life had been pure but for this one fault; and this fault how many had committed before him! Then follows a long list of poets, who, if to sing of love was an offence, had been grievous offenders. Then there had been poems on dice-playing, and dice had been a grievous offence in the old days. All verses that taught men how to waste that precious thing time,—

verses about swimming, about ball-playing, about the trundling of hoops (a favourite amusement, it would seem, even with middle-aged Romans), about the furnishings of the table and its etiquette, about the different kinds of earthenware (the fancy for curious pots and pans was, it will be seen, in full force among the wealthy Romans of Ovid's time),—might be condemned. Plays, too, and pictures, were grievous offenders in the same way. Why should Ovid be the only one to suffer?—Ovid, too, who had written grave and serious works which no one could censure, and who had never wronged any man by slanderous verses, over whose fall no one rejoiced, but many had mourned.

"Permit these pleas thy mighty will to sway,
Great Lord, thy country's Father, Hope, and Stay!
Return I ask not; though at last thy heart,
Touched by long suffering, may the boon impart;
Let not the penalty the fault exceed:
Exile I bear; for peace, for life I plead."

It is probable that the poem was despatched to Rome immediately after its author had reached Tomi. He would not have ventured to put in a plea for the mitigation of punishment before he had at least begun to suffer it; but it is equally certain that the plea would not be long delayed. The third book of the 'Sorrows' was likewise composed and sent off during the first year of his banishment. The twelfth out of its fourteen elegies speaks of the return of spring. The winter of the Pontus, longer than any that he had known

before, had passed away; lads and lasses in happier lands were gathering violets; the swallow was building under the eaves; vineyard and forest—strangers, alas! both of them, to the land of the Getæ—were bursting into leaf. And in Rome's happier place, which he might never see again, all the athletic sports of the Campus, all the gay spectacles of the theatre, were being enjoyed. The poet's only solace was that, as even in these dismal regions spring brought some relief, and opened the sea to navigation, some ship might reach the shore and bring news of Italy and of Cæsar's triumphs. The next elegy must have been written about the same time. Ovid's birthday (we know it to have been the 20th of March) came, the first that had visited him in his exile. "Would that thou hadst brought," he says, "not an addition but an end to my pain!"

"What dost thou here? Has angry Cæsar sent
Thee too to share my hopeless banishment?
Think'st thou to find the customary rite—
To see, the while I stand in festive white,
With flowery wreaths the smoking altars crowned,
And hear in spicy flames the salt meal's crackling sound?
Shall honeyed cakes do honour to the day,
While I in words of happy omen pray?
Not such my lot. A cruel fate and stern
Forbids me thus to welcome thy return;
With gloomy cypress be my altars dight,
And flames prepared the funeral flames to light!
I burn no incense to unheeding skies,—
From heart so sad no words of blessing rise;
If yet for me one fitting prayer remain,
'Tis this: Return not to these shores again!"

The gloom of his lot was aggravated by causes of which he bitterly complains in more than one of his poems. In the third elegy, which he addressed to his wife, she must not wonder that the letter was written in a strange hand. He had been grievously, even dangerously, ill. The climate did not suit him; nor the water (Ovid seems to have been a water-drinker), nor the soil. He had not a decent house to cover his head; there was no food that could suit a sick man's appetite. No physician could be found to prescribe for his malady. There was not even a friend who could while away the time by conversation or reading. He felt, he complains in another letter, a constant lassitude, which extended from his body to his mind. Perpetual sleeplessness troubled him; his food gave him no nourishment; he was wasted away almost to a skeleton. Writing about two years after this time, he assumes a more cheerful tone. His health was restored. He had become hardened to the climate. If it were not for his mental trouble, all would be well. Another pressing matter was anxiety about his literary reputation, which the offended authorities at home were doing their best to extinguish. He imagines his little book making its way with trembling steps through the well-known scenes of the capital. It goes to the temple of Apollo, where the works of authors old and new were open for the inspection of readers. There it looks for its brothers,—not the luckless poem which had excited the wrath of Cæsar, and which their father wished he had never begotten, but the unoffending others. Alas! they were all absent; and even while

it looked, the guardian of the place bade it begone. Nor was it more successful in the neighbouring library of the temple of Liberty. Banished from public, its only resource was to find shelter from private friendship. To such shelter, accordingly, the volume is commended in the last elegy of the book. This friend was, it seems, a patron of literature,—"a lover of new poets," Ovid calls him. And the author begs his favour and care for his latest work. Only he must not look for too much. Everything was against him in that barbarous land. The wonder was that he could write at all. "There is no supply of books here to rouse and nurture my mind; instead of books, there is the clash of swords and the bow. There is no one in the country to give me, should I read to him my verses, an intelligent hearing. There is no place to which I can retire. The closely-guarded walls and fast-shut gate keep out the hostile Getæ. Often I look for a word, for a name, for a place, and there is no one to help me to it; often (I am ashamed to confess it) when I try to say something, words fail me; I find that I have forgotten how to speak. On every side of me I hear the sound of Thracian and Scythian tongues. I almost believe that I could write in Getic measures. Nay, believe me, I sometimes fear lest Pontic words should be found mixed with my Latin." We have the same complaints and fears repeated in the fifth book. After some uncomplimentary expressions about the savage manners of the people, and their equally savage dress and appearance,—the furs and loose trousers by which they sought, but with

ill success, to keep out the cold, and their long and shaggy beards,—he goes on to speak about the language :—

"Among a few remain traces of the Greek tongue, but even these corrupted with Getic accent. There is scarcely a man among the people who by any chance can give you an answer on any matter in Latin. I, the Roman bard, am compelled—pardon me, O Muses !—to speak for the most part after Sarmatian fashion. I am ashamed of it, and I own it ; by this time, from long disuse, I myself can scarcely recall Latin words. And I do not doubt but that there are not a few barbarisms in this little book. It is not the fault of the writer, but of the place."

No one has ever discovered any "Ponticisms" in Ovid. They are probably as imaginary as is the "Paduanism" which some superfine critics of antiquity discovered in Livy.* One of the poet's apprehensions was, however, we shall find, actually fulfilled. He did "learn to write in Getic measure," for he composed a poem in the language.

One of the elegies in the third book has been already noticed. It is addressed to Perilla, and the question whether this lady was, as some commentators suppose, the daughter of the poet, has been briefly discussed. The name is certainly not real. It is of Greek origin, and it has been already seen that none of the letters in the 'Sorrows' are addressed by name to the persons for whom they are intended. Besides this, we are elsewhere informed that Ovid's daughter was married, and was the mother of two children, and that, at the time of her father's banishment, she was

* Livy was a native of Padua (Patavium).

absent in Africa, having probably accompanied her husband to some post in that province. These circumstances do not suit the poem addressed to Perilla: "Go, letter, hastily penned, to salute Perilla, the faithful messenger of my words; you will find her either sitting with her dear mother, or among her books and Muses." He reminds her of how he had been her teacher in the art of verse, and tells her that if her genius remained still as vivid as of old, only Sappho would excel her. Let her not be terrified by his own sad fate; only she must beware of perilous subjects. Then follows a noble vindication of his art, and of the dignity which it gave to him, its humble follower:—

"Long years will mar those looks so comely now,
And age will write its wrinkles on thy brow.
Mark how it comes with fatal, noiseless pace,
To spoil the blooming honours of thy face!
Soon men will say, and thou wilt hear with pain,
'Surely she once was lovely;' and in vain,
That thy too faithful glass is false, complain.
Small are thy riches, though the loftiest state
Would suit thee well; but be they small or great,
Chance takes and brings them still with fickle wing—
To-day a beggar, yesterday a king.
Why name each good? Each has its little day;
Gifts of the soul alone defy decay.
I live of friends, of country, home, bereft,—
All I could lose, but genius still is left;
This is my solace, this my constant friend;
Ere this be reached e'en Cæsar's power must end."

It is needless to go on in detail through what re-

mains of the 'Sorrows.' The tenth poem of the fourth book should be mentioned as being a brief autobiography of the poet. Its substance has already been given. Elsewhere he pursues, with an iteration which would be wearying in the extreme but for his marvellous power of saying the same thing in many ways, the old subjects. The hardships of his lot, the fidelity or faithlessness of his friends, the solace which his art supplied him, and the effort to discover some way of propitiating those who held his fate in their hands,—these topics occupy in turn his pen. The following elegant translation by the late Mr Philip Stanhope Worsley, of one of the latest poems of the book, may serve as a good specimen of his verse:—

"'Study the mournful hours away,
Lest in dull sloth thy spirit pine;'
Hard words thou writest: verse is gay,
And asks a lighter heart than mine.

No calms my stormy life beguile,
Than mine can be no sadder chance;
You bid bereavèd Priam smile,
And Niobe, the childless, dance.

Is grief or study more my part,
Whose life is doomed to wilds like these?
Though you should make my feeble heart
Strong with the strength of Socrates,

Such ruin would crush wisdom down;
Stronger than man is wrath divine.
That sage, whom Phœbus gave the crown,
Never could write in grief like mine.

Can I my land and thee forget,
Nor the felt sorrow wound my breast?
Say that I can—but foes beset
This place, and rob me of all rest.

Add that my mind hath rusted now,
And fallen far from what it was.
The land, though rich, that lacks the plough
Is barren, save of thorns and grass.

The horse, that long hath idle stood,
Is soon o'ertaken in the race;
And, torn from its familiar flood,
The chinky pinnace rots apace.

Nor hope that I, before but mean,
Can to my former self return;
Long sense of ills hath bruised my brain,
Half the old fires no longer burn.

Yet oft I take the pen and try,
As now, to build the measured rhyme.
Words come not, or, as meet thine eye,
Words worthy of their place and time.

Last, glory cheers the heart that fails,
And love of praise inspires the mind—
I followed once Fame's star, my sails
Filled with a favourable wind:

But now 'tis not so well with me,
To care if fame be lost or won:
Nay, but I would, if that might be,
Live all unknown beneath the sun."

It remains only to fix the date of the 'Sorrows.' Its earliest poems were penned during the voyage from

Rome. The latest belongs to the earlier part of the third year of his exile. "Thrice, since I came to Pontus, has the Danube been stopped by frost, thrice the wave of the sea been hardened within." It is probable that Ovid reached Tomi somewhere about the month of September, A.D. 9. The "third winter" of his banishment, therefore, would be drawing to a close in March, A.D. 12, when he was about to complete his fifty-fourth year.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE POEMS OF EXILE: THE LETTERS FROM THE PONTUS —DEATH OF OVID.

THE 'Letters' number forty-four in all, and are contained in four books. They are arranged in chronological order—an order, however, which is not absolutely exact. The earliest of them dates from the same year to which the fifth book of the 'Sorrows' is to be attributed. In the prefatory epistle, addressed to Brutus—a relative, it is probable, of the famous tyrannicide—the poet tells his friend that he will find the new book as full of sorrows as its predecessor. It contains, however, not a few indications that his position had been somewhat changed—and changed for the better. He had not ventured to prefix to the various poems of which the 'Sorrows' were made up the names of those to whom they were addressed. This he does not now scruple to do; and we find accordingly that, instead of the two or three who, he complains in the earlier book, had alone been left to him out of a crowd of companions, there was no inconsiderable number of friends who were willing to remember, and even, if it might be, to help him. We may count as many as twenty names; not reckoning

Germanicus Cæsar, to whom Ovid addresses a complimentary letter, and Cotys, a tributary king, the boundaries of whose dominions were not far from Tomi. While the revival of these old friendships consoled the poet, and even buoyed him up with hopes that his banishment might be terminated, or at least mitigated, by a change of scene, the place itself was becoming (though, indeed, he is scarcely willing to allow it) less odious to him: its semi-barbarous inhabitants were not insensible to the honour of having so distinguished a resident among them; and his own behaviour, as he tells one of his correspondents, had made a favourable impression on them. "They would rather that I left them," he says, "because they see that I wish to do so; but as far as regards themselves, they like me to be here. Do not take all this on my word; you may see the decrees of the town, which speak in my praise, and make me free of all taxes. Such honours are scarcely suitable to a miserable fugitive like myself; but the neighbouring towns have bestowed on me the same privilege." The sympathising people might well complain that their kindness was repaid with ingratitude, when their fellow-townsman continued to speak with unmitigated abhorrence of the place to which he had been condemned. "I care for nothing," he says, still harping on the constant theme of his verse, to one of his distant friends, "but to get out of this place. Even the Styx—if there is a Styx—would be a good exchange for the Danube; yes, and anything, if such the world contain, that is below the Styx itself. The plough-land less hates the weed,

the swallow less hates the frost, than Naso hates the regions which border on the war-loving Getæ. Such words as these make the people of Tomi wroth with me. The public anger is stirred up by my verse. Shall I never cease to be injured by my song? Shall I always suffer from my imprudent genius? Why do I hesitate to lop off my fingers, and so make writing impossible? why do I take again, in my folly, to the warfare which has damaged me before? Yet I have done no wrong. It is no fault of mine, men of Tomi; you I love, though I cordially hate your country. Let any one search the record of my toils—there is no letter in complaint of *you*. It is the cold—it is the attack that we have to dread on all sides—it is the assaults that the enemy make on our walls, that I complain of. It was against the place, not against the people, that I made the charge. You yourselves often blame your own country. . . . It is a malicious interpreter that stirs up the anger of the people against me, and brings a new charge against my verse. I wish that I was as fortunate as I am honest in heart. There does not live a man whom my words have wronged. Nay, were I blacker than Illyrian pitch, I could not wrong so loyal a people as you. The kindness with which you have received me in my troubles shows, men of Tomi, that a people so gentle must be genuine Greeks.* My own people, the Peligni, and Sulmo, the land of my home, could not have behaved more kindly in my troubles. Honours which you

* This was a compliment which would be certain to please a half-bred population like that of the old colony.

would scarcely give to the prosperous and unharmed, you have lately bestowed upon me. I am the only inhabitant—one only excepted, who held the privilege of legal right—that has been exempted from public burdens. My temples have been crowned with the sacred chaplet, lately voted to me, against my will, by the favour of the people. Dear, then, as to Latona was that Delian land, the only spot which gave a safe refuge to the wanderer, so dear is Tomi to me—Tomi which down to this day remains a faithful host to one who has been banished from his native land! If only the gods had granted that it might have some hope of peace and quiet, and that it were a little further removed from the frosts of the pole!"

The poet, though he could not restrain or moderate his complaints about the miseries of his exile, did his best to make a return for these honours and hospitalities. "I am ashamed to say it," he writes to Carus, a scholar of distinction, who had been appointed tutor to the children of Germanicus, "but I have written a book in the language of the Getæ; I have arranged their barbarous words in Roman measures. I was happy enough to please (congratulate me on the success); nay, I begin to have the reputation of a poet among these uncivilised Getæ. Do you ask me my subject? I sang the praises of Cæsar. I was assisted in my novel attempt by the power of the god. I told them how that the body of Father Augustus was mortal, while his divinity had departed to the dwellings of heaven. I told them how there was one equal in virtue to his father, who, under compulsion, had

assumed the reigns of an empire which he had often refused.* I told them that thou, Livia, art the Vesta of modest matrons, of whom it cannot be determined whether thou art more worthy of thy husband or thy son. I told them that there were two youths, firm supporters of their father, who have given some pledges of their spirit. When I had read this to the end, written as it was in the verse of another tongue, and the last page had been turned by my fingers, all nodded their heads, all shook their full quivers, and a prolonged murmur of applause came from the Getic crowd; and some cried, 'Since you write such things about Cæsar, you should have been restored to Cæsar's empire.' So he spake; but, alas, my Carus! the sixth winter sees me still an exile beneath the snowy sky." It is to this subject of his exile that in the 'Letters,' as in the 'Sorrows,' he returns with a mournful and wearisome iteration. The greater number of them

* Tacitus describes with scorn the assumed reluctance of Tiberius openly to accept the power which he really possessed, and which he had no intention of abandoning, or even in the least degree diminishing. Any attempt to take him at his word was at once fiercely resented. He had said, for instance, that though not equal to the whole burden of the state, he would undertake the charge of whatever part might be intrusted to him; and one of the senators committed the indiscretion of saying, "I ask you, Cæsar, what part of the state you wish intrusted to you?" This embarrassing question was never forgotten or forgiven, and was ultimately, if we may believe the historian, punished with death. Tiberius's final acquiescence is thus described: "Wearied at last by the assembly's clamorous importunity and the urgent demands of individual senators, he gave way by degrees, not admitting that he undertook empire, but yet ceasing to refuse it and to be entreated."

belong to the fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth years of the poet's life. The fifth of the last book, for instance, is addressed to "Sextus Pompeius, now Consul." Pompeius, who was collaterally related to the great rival of Cæsar, entered on his consulship on January 1st, A.D. 14. "Go, trivial elegy, to our consul's learned ears! take words for that honoured man to read. The way is long, and you go with halting feet.* And the earth lies hidden, covered with snows of winter. When you shall have crossed frosty Thrace, and Hæmus covered with clouds, and the waters of the Ionian Sea, you will come to the imperial city in less than ten days, even though you do not hasten your journey." † The letter marks the time at which Ovid's hopes of pardon had risen to their highest. Powerful friends had interceded for him; with one of them advanced to the consulship—a token of high favour, though nothing but a shadow of power—he might hope for the best. And it is probable, as has been before explained, that Augustus was at this very

* This is a favourite witticism with Ovid. The elegiac couplet was made up of two feet of unequal length—the hexameter or six-foot, and the pentameter or five-foot verse. Hence it was said to halt.

† This means that the letter would be somewhat less than ten days in travelling from Brundusium (the port of departure and arrival for travellers to or from the East) to Rome. The distance may be roughly stated at about 300 miles. Cicero gives us to understand on one occasion that a letter addressed to him had travelled the same distance in *seven* days. Horace occupied about double the time in the leisurely journey which he describes himself as making (Sat. i. 5) in company with Mæcenas, Virgil, and other friends.

time meditating nothing less than another disposition of the imperial power,—a disposition which would have reinstated in their position his own direct descendants, and with them have restored the fortunes of Ovid. These hopes were to be disappointed. On the 29th of August in the same year, Augustus died at Nola, in Campania. There were some who declared that his end was at least hastened by Livia, determined to secure at any price the prospects of her son Tiberius. As the emperor had completed his seventy-sixth year, it is unnecessary thus to account for a death which, though it may have been opportune, was certainly to be expected. On Ovid's fortunes the effect was disastrous. The very next letter is that which has been already quoted as deploring the death of Augustus at the very time when he was beginning to entertain milder thoughts, and the ruin which had overtaken his old friend and patron, Fabius Maximus. Ovid, however, did not yet abandon all hope. To address directly Tiberius or Livia seemed useless. His thoughts turned to the young Germanicus, Tiberius's nephew, whose wife was Agrippina, daughter of the elder and sister of the younger Julia. Among the friends of this prince, who was then in command of the armies of the Rhine —and, though an object of suspicion to his uncle and adopting father, high in popular favour—was P. Suillius Rufus. Suillius was closely connected with Ovid, whose step-daughter (the daughter of his third wife) he had married. He must then have been a young man, as it is more than forty years afterwards that

we hear of his being banished by Nero; and he filled the part of quæstor (an office of a financial kind) on the staff of Germanicus. "If you shall feel a hope," he writes, "that anything can be done by prayer, entreat with suppliant voice the gods whom you worship. Thy gods are the youthful Cæsar; make propitious these thy deities. Surely no altar is more familiar to you than this. That does not allow the prayers of any of its ministers to be in vain; from hence seek thou help for my fortunes. If it should help, with however small a breeze, my sinking boat will rise again from the midst of the waters. Thou wilt bring due incense to the devouring flames, and testify how strong the gods can be." The writer then addresses, and continues to address throughout the rest of the letter, Germanicus himself, for whose eye it was of course intended, and before whom Suillius is entreated in the concluding couplet by his "almost father-in-law," as Ovid quaintly calls himself, to bring it. Another friend, whose intercession in the same quarter the poet entreats, is Carus—tutor, as has been said before, to the sons of Germanicus. This letter was written in "the sixth winter of exile"—*i.e.*, about the end of A.D. 14 or the beginning of 15—the time to which we are to ascribe the poem in the Getic language, on the death and deification of Augustus. Shortly afterwards must have been written a letter addressed to Græcinus, who filled the office of consul during the second half of the latter year. Here we see the most humiliating phase of Ovid's servility. It is difficult to understand how little more than fifty

years after the republic had ceased to exist, an Italian of the Italians, one of that hardy Samnite race which had so long contended on equal terms with Rome itself, could be found descending to such depths of degradation. The servile multitudes of Egypt and Assyria had never prostrated themselves more ignobly before Sesostris or Nimrod than did this free-born citizen before the men who were so relentlessly persecuting him. He tells his powerful friend that his piety was known to the whole country. "This stranger land sees that there is in my dwelling a chapel to Cæsar. There stand along with him, his pious son and his priestess spouse, powers not inferior to the already perfected deity. And that no part of the family should be wanting, there stand both his grand sons, the one close to his grandmother's, and the other to his father's side. To these I address words of prayer with an offering of incense as often as the day arises from the eastern sky."* Two years before, we find him thanking his friend Maximus Cotta for a present of the statues which this chapel enshrined. He mentions three as the number which had been sent. (The images of the two young princes had since been added.) In this letter he seems to lose himself in transports of gratitude. "He is no longer an exile at the ends of the earth. He is a prosperous dweller

* It may be as well to explain that by Cæsar is meant Augustus (who was now dead), and by the "pious son" Tiberius. Livia, as the widow of the deified prince, was the priestess of his worship: the two grandsons are Drusus, son of Tiberius, who stands by his grandmother Livia—and Germanicus, who stands by his adopting father Tiberius.

in the midst of the capital. He sees the faces of the Cæsars. Such happiness he had never ventured to hope for." And so he treads the well-worn round of customary adulation. A short specimen will be enough to show to what depths he could descend. "Happy they who look not on the likenesses but on the reality; who see before their eyes the very bodies of the god! Since a hard fate has denied me this privilege, I worship those whom art has granted to my prayer—the likeness of the true. 'Tis thus men know the gods, whom the heights of heaven conceal; 'tis thus that the shape of Jupiter is worshipped for Jupiter himself." And then, anxious not to forget the practical object to which all these elaborate flatteries were directed, he goes on: "Take care that this semblance of yours which is with me, and shall ever be with me, be not found in a hostile spot. My head shall sooner part from the neck, the eye shall sooner leave the mangled cheeks, than I should bear your loss, O Deities of the Commonwealth! you shall be the harbour and the sanctuary of my banishment. You I will embrace, if I be surrounded by Getic arms. You, as my eagles and my standards, I will follow. If I am not deceived and cheated by too powerful a desire, the hope of a happier place of exile is at hand. The look upon your likeness is less and less gloomy; the face seems to give assent to my prayer. I pray that the presages of my anxious heart may be true, and that the anger of my god, however just it is, may yet be mitigated." It is difficult to conceive a more pitiable sight than that of the wretched exile

day after day going through, with sinking hopes and failing spirits, this miserable pretence of worship; prostrating himself before men whose baseness and profligacy no one knew better than himself, and, while he crushed down the curses that rose naturally to his lips, reiterating the lying prayer, for which he must have now despaired of an answer. That he should have performed this elaborate hypocrisy, not in public but in the privacy of his own home, merely for the sake of being able to say that he had done it, and with but the very dimmest hope of getting any good from it, is inexpressibly pitiable; and that it should be possible for a man of genius to stoop to such degradation, and for great princes, as Augustus and Tiberius certainly were, to be swayed in their purposes by such an exhibition—and that they *might* be swayed by it Ovid certainly believed—is a warning against the evils of despotic power such as it would not be easy to match.

One or two other letters may be briefly noticed. One addressed to Tuticanus, a brother poet, who had been distinguished by a translation of the Odyssey, relieves the gloomy monotony of complaint and entreaty by a faint spark of humour. Whether Tuticanus had hinted annoyance at not having received any of the poetical epistles with which other friends had been honoured, or whether, as is more probable, there was a hope that some help might be got from him, Ovid apologises for not having written before. The humour of his excuse is not very brilliant; and it is not easy to explain it without a reference to the principles of Latin versification, which would be here out of place.

Tuticanus, in fact, was a name which "might be said, but never could be sung." "There is no one," says the poet, "whom I should have more delighted to honour—if, indeed, there is any honour to be found in my poetry. But your name will not come into my verse. I am ashamed to split it into two, and put 'Tuti' in one line and 'canus' in the next. Nor while it is properly pronounced Tūtĭcānus, can I prevail upon myself to shorten the third syllable and call you Tūtĭcănus, or to shorten the first and call you Tŭtĭcānus, or make all three long and change it into Tūtīcānus." It has been said that the ancients, and especially the Romans, were easily amused, and Ovid's friend was apparently no exception to the rule.

Another letter introduces us to a personage of whom we would gladly know more, Cotys, one of the tributary kings of Thrace. Cotys was a name of considerable antiquity in this region. Among those who had borne it was a prince who had played a part in the struggle between Philip of Macedon and Athens. Athenæus tells a strange story of his insane extravagance and cruelty, indicating the barbarian nature thinly veneered with Greek civilisation, or rather luxury. The Cotys to whom Ovid writes was, if the poet is to be believed, of a different temper. Claiming descent from Eumolpus, a Thracian bard, who figures in the early legends of Attica, his tastes were such as became his genealogy. He wrote verse, probably in the Greek language; and Ovid declares that, had they not had the name of their author prefixed to them, he could not have supposed them to have

been written by a native of Thrace. Orpheus, adds the practised flatterer, was not the only poet whom that region had produced. It had now good reason to be proud of the genius of its king. It is a curious circumstance that a semi-barbarous prince—for such Cotys must have seemed to any Roman who had no special reason for complimenting him—should have been the occasion of the famous lines which have become the standing apology for a liberal education: "Diligently to acquire a liberal education, softens men's manners, and forbids them to grow rude."* From what we hear of Cotys elsewhere, we find that his culture was not exactly in the right place among the savage tribes of Thrace. Augustus divided between him and his brother Rhescuporis the kingdom which had belonged to his father Rhœmetalces. "In this division," continues Tacitus, to whom we are indebted for the facts, "the cultivated lands, the towns, and what bordered on Greek territory, fell to Cotys; the wild and barbarous portion, with enemies on its frontier, to Rhescuporis. The kings, too, themselves differed—Cotys having a gentle and kindly temper, the other a fierce and ambitious spirit, which could not brook a partner." Open hostilities, provoked by Rhescuporis, broke out. The temporising policy of Tiberius, who had by that time succeeded to the throne, prevented him from rendering due assistance to Cotys, who, in the end, was treacherously seized by his brother, and put to death.

* "Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes
Emollit mores nec sinit esse feros."

Of the literary merits of the 'Letters from the Pontus' there is little to be said. The monotony of its subject was fatal to excellence. Ovid knew, at least as well as any man who ever wrote, how to say the same thing over and over again in different ways; but even his genius could not indefinitely vary his constant complaint that he was living among savages, and under an inhospitable sky; his constant prayer that he might be released from his gloomy prison, or, at least, transferred to a more genial spot. Nor does he vary his subject with the episodical narratives in the telling of which he so much excelled. The story of Orestes and Pylades is the only specimen of the kind that occurs in the four books. Ovid puts it into the mouth of an old native of the country, who speaks of having himself seen the temple where the incident happened, towering high with its vast columns, and approached by an ascent of twelve steps.* The versification is somewhat languid, and occasionally careless. The poems are not exactly unworthy of their author, for they are probably as good as the subject admitted. To a Latin scholar, Ovid's verse, even when his subject is uninteresting, is al-

* The story is so well known that a very few words may suffice for it. Orestes and Pylades land at Tauri, and, according to the custom of the place, are seized and taken to the temple of Diana. There one of them must be offered to the goddess. Each is anxious to be the object of the fatal choice. While they are contending, they find that the priestess is the sister of Orestes, Iphigenia, who had been transported hither from the altar at Aulis, where she had been about to suffer a similar fate. By her help they escape.

ways pleasing; an English reader would certainly find them exceedingly tedious.

The 'Ibis' is a poem of between six and seven hundred lines in length, containing almost as many imprecations, displaying in their variety an amazing fertility of imagination, which are directed against a personal enemy who had spoken ill of the poet in his banishment, had persecuted his wife with his attentions, and had endeavoured to snatch some plunder from his property. It is modelled, as Ovid himself states, on a poem of the same name which Callimachus wrote against a poet who had been his pupil, and afterwards became a rival—Apollonius Rhodius. Callimachus's quarrel with his brother poet seems to have been a purely literary one. Apollonius preferred the simplicity of the epic writers to the artificial style of his master. The censure was bitterly felt, and resented with a vehemence which transcends anything that has been recorded in the history of letters. The person whom Ovid attacked under the name of Ibis is said to have been one Hyginus, a freedman of the Emperor Augustus, and chief of the Palatine Library. The principal ground for this idea is that Hyginus was certainly at one time on terms of intimate friendship with Ovid, and that none of the letters written in exile are addressed to him. Either he or some one else among the numerous acquaintances who courted the poet in the days of his popularity, and who deserted him in his exile, may have been in the author's thoughts; but the poem is scarcely serious. It has the look of being a

literary *tour de force*. Callimachus was a favourite model with Roman authors, and Ovid probably amused some of the vacant hours of his exile with translating his poem.* Every story of Greek mythology, legend, and history is ransacked to furnish the curses which are heaped on the head of the luckless man. "May he fall over a staircase, as did Elpenor, the companion of Ulysses! May he be torn to pieces by a lioness, as was Phayllus, tyrant of Ambracia! May he be killed by a bee-sting in the eye, as was the poet Achæus! May he be devoured, as Glaucus was devoured, by his horses; or leap, as did another Glaucus, into the sea! May he drink, with trembling mouth, the same draught that Socrates drank, all undisturbed! May he perish caught by the hands, as was Milo in the oak which he tried to rend!" These are a few, but, it will probably be thought, sufficient, examples of the 'Ibis.'

The last lines written by Ovid are probably some which we find in the 'Fasti' under the first of June, praising Tiberius for the pious work which he had accomplished in rebuilding and dedicating various temples at Rome. These temples were dedicated, as we learn from Tacitus, in A.D. 17. The poet died, St Jerome tells us, in the same year, some time before September, from which month, in Jerome's chronicle, the years

* Allusions to Virgil's Æneid show that it was not wholly a translation.

are reckoned. It had been his earnest wish that the sentence which had been so rigorously executed against him during his life might at least be relaxed after his death, and that his bones might be permitted to rest in his native Italy. The desire was not granted: he was buried at Tomi. A pretended discovery of his tomb was made early in the sixteenth century at Stainz, in Austria,—a place far too remote from Tomi to make the story at all probable. If his body could have been transported so far, why not to Italy? The story appeared in another edition; the tomb and its epitaph were the same, as was also the year of the discovery, but the place was now Sawar, in Lower Hungary. It may probably be put down as one of the impostures, more or less ingenious, with which scholars have often amused themselves, and of which the period following the revival of learning—a period during which genuine discoveries of classical remains were frequently made—was particularly fertile. As recently as the beginning of this century, it was announced in some of the Parisian papers that the Russian troops, while engaged in building a fortress on the banks of the Danube, had opened the poet's sepulchre, and had named the place *Ovidopol*, in his honour. Unfortunately it turned out that the fortress had never been built, or even commenced; and that the local name of *Lagone Ovidouloni* (which, to give a colour to the story, had been changed into *Lacus Ovidoli*) owed its origin, not to any remembrance of Ovid, but to the practice of washing there the sheep (Lat. *ovis*) which

were exported in large numbers from Moldavia for the consumption of Constantinople. We may dismiss as equally apocryphal the story of the silver writing-style of the poet, which was shown in 1540 to Isabella, Queen of Hungary, as having been recently discovered at Belgrade, the ancient *Taurunum*.

CHAPTER IX.

FRAGMENTS—LOST POEMS—GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

In his 'Art of Love,' Ovid tells his readers that he had written a book on "Cosmetics," which was small in size, but had cost him much pains. Of this book we have remaining a fragment of about a hundred lines. The poet begins by saying that everything is the better for cultivation—the human face of course included. The simple Sabine matrons of old may have been content to spend all their labour on their fields, but the fair ones of modern Rome had different tastes. Dresses embroidered with gold, hair richly scented and arranged in various ways, fingers adorned with rings, and ear-rings of pearls, so heavy that two pearls were weight enough for an ear—such were now their tastes. How could they be blamed, for the tastes of men were just the same? They were quite right in trying to please; only let them please in lawful ways. Drugs and love-potions must be eschewed. Goodness should be their chief charm. The days would come when it would be a pain to look into the mirror; but virtue lasts through life, and the love which attaches itself to it is not lightly lost. After this edifying preface,

the poet proceeds to his subject. His instructions are eminently practical in character,—giving the ingredients, the proper weight, and the right manner of mixing them. His first recipe is for brightening the complexion. Take two pounds of barley, as much of bitter lupine, and ten eggs; dry and then grind the substance. Add a sixth of a pound of stag's-horns; they must be those shed by the animal for the first time. The mixture is to be passed through a sieve. Twelve narcissus-roots with the rind stripped off are to be pounded in a marble mortar; add the sixth of a pound of gum, and as much spelt, with a pound and a half of honey. "Dress your face," says the poet, "with this, and you will have a complexion brighter than your mirror itself." The prescription is somewhat complicated; but then, it must be allowed, the object is difficult of attainment. Colour, as might be expected, is more easily secured. To five scruples of fennel add nine of myrrh, a handful of dry rose-leaves, and a quantity equal in weight to the rose-leaves of gum-ammoniacum and frankincense, and pour over it the liquor of barley. What other secrets of beauty Ovid may have unfolded cannot be known, for here the fragment breaks off.

About a hundred and thirty lines of a poem on "Fishing" have also survived; but they are in a very broken condition, and a passage descriptive of land animals has somehow found its way into the midst of them. They contain nothing practical, except it is the advice which those acquainted with the art of sea-fishing will recognise as sound, that the fisherman

must not try his fortune in very deep water. A poem called the "Walnut," in which the tree complains, among other things, of its hard lot in being pelted with stones by passers-by, has been attributed to Ovid. Some critics have supposed it to be a juvenile production, but the weight of authority is against its authenticity.

In the tragedy of "Medea" the world has suffered a serious loss. Quintilian, a severe critic, says of it that it seemed to him to prove how much its author could have achieved, if he had chosen to moderate rather than to indulge his cleverness. He mentions in the same context the "Thyestes" of Varius, which might challenge comparison, he says, with any of the Greek tragedies. The two dramas are also coupled together by Tacitus in his "Dialogue about Famous Orators," where he compares the popularity of dramatic and oratorical works, just as we might couple together "Hamlet" and "King Lear." The "Medea" has been altogether lost, but we may gather some idea of the manner in which the poet treated his subject from the seventh book of the 'Metamorphoses,' the first half of which is devoted to the legend of the great Colchian sorceress. What portion of it was chosen for the subject of the drama we do not know; but it may be conjectured that while the "Medea" of Euripides depicted the last scenes of her career, when she avenged the infidelity of Jason by the murder of her children, Ovid represented her at an earlier time, when, as the daughter of King Æëtes, she loved and helped the gallant leader of the Argonauts. Anyhow,

we find in the 'Metamorphoses' a very fine soliloquy, in which the love-stricken princess holds debate between Love and Duty :—

"Up! gird thee! for delay
Is death! For aye thy debtor for his life
Preserved must Jason be! And torch and rite
His honoured wife will make thee, and through all
Pelasgian cities shall their matrons hail
The Saviour of their Prince!—Ah! thus then, thus
My Sister, Brother, Sire, my natal soil,
My country's Gods, do I desert, and fly
To exile with the winds?—my Sire is stern,
Our land is barbarous:—my Brother yet
An infant:—for my Sister, with my own
Her vows are one:—and, for the gods,—within
This bosom beats the Greatest! Little 'tis
To lose, and much to win! Fame to have saved
This flower of all Achaian youth, and sight
And knowledge of a nobler land, where tower
The cities of whose glory Fame even here
Loud rumours, and the culture and the arts
That grace the life of Heroes! More than all
I win me Æson's son, for whom the world
With all its treasures were but cheap exchange!
Oh bliss! to be his wife, his envied wife,
Dear to his kindred-Gods! My head will touch
The very stars with rapture! What if rocks,
As Rumour speaks, clash jostling in our track
Athwart the Seas, and fell Charybdis, foe
To ships, with flux and reflux terrible
Swallows and spouts the foam-flood?—what if, girt
With serpents, in Sicilian ocean-caves
Devouring Scylla barks?—The seas for me,
Clasped to the bosom of the man I love,
Will wear no terrors:—or, within his arms,

If fear should rise, 'twill be, not for myself,
But only for my Husband. Husband?—Ah!
With what fair name, Medea, dost thou cloak
Thy purposed crime? Ah! think how great the guilt
Thou darest, and, while yet thou canst, escape!"

The value of Ovid's poetry has been estimated from time to time in the course of these pages. Quintilian says that he was too much in love with his own cleverness, but that he was in some respects worthy of commendation. Lord Macaulay confirms, or perhaps amplifies, this judgment, when he says that Ovid "had two insupportable faults: the one is, that he will always be clever; the other, that he never knows when to have done." Of the 'Metamorphoses' the same great critic wrote: "There are some very fine things in this poem; and in ingenuity, and the art of doing difficult things in expression and versification as if they were the easiest in the world, Ovid is quite incomparable." He thought that the best parts of the work were the second book (specimens of which have been given in Chapter IV.), and the first half of the thirteenth book, where, in the oratorical contest between Ajax and Ulysses for the arms of Achilles, his own tastes were doubtless satisfied. The severest criticism which he passes upon the poet is when he pronounces the 'Art of Love' to be his best poem.

If popularity is a test of merit, Ovid must be placed very high among the writers of antiquity. No classical poet has been so widely and so continuously read. He

seems not to have been forgotten even when learning and the taste for literature were at their lowest ebb. Among the stories which attest the favour in which he was held may be quoted the words which are reported to have been used by Alphonso, surnamed the Magnanimous. That eccentric prince, who may be called the Pyrrhus of modern history, while prosecuting his conquests in Italy, came to the town of Sulmo, which has been mentioned as Ovid's birthplace. "Willingly would I yield this region, which is no small or contemptible part of the kingdom of Naples, could it have been granted to my times to possess this poet. Even dead I hold him to be of more account than the possession of the whole of Apulia." The bibliography of Ovid, as a writer in the 'Nouvelle Biographie Universelle' remarks, is immense. Two folio volumes of the 'New Catalogue of the British Museum' are devoted to an enumeration of editions and translations of the whole or various parts of his works.

For the immorality of much of his writings no defence can be made. Yet, if it is anything in favour of a culprit that he is not alone in his guilt, it may be urged in arrest of judgment that one of the greatest of English poets translated with much approval of his own generation the very worst of these writings,—and not only translated them, but contrived to make them more offensive in their new dress than they are in the old.

It was not altogether a bad character which has

been thus summed up by Lord Macaulay: "He seems to have been a very good fellow; rather too fond of women; a flatterer and a coward: but kind and generous; and free from envy, though a man of letters, and though sufficiently vain of his own performances."

END OF OVID.

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